Learning from Africa: the theological and liturgical implications of inculturation for Anglican worship.

Thesis

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Gaenor Mary Loomes
B.A.(Hons.)

LEARNING FROM AFRICA: The theological and liturgical implications of inculturation for Anglican worship

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St. John's College, Nottingham

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

ABSTRACT

Learning from Africa: The theological and liturgical implications of inculturation for Anglican worship

In the past thirty years there has been a growing use of the term 'inculturation' within the worldwide Christian Church in theological, missiological and liturgical circles. There has been some debate over what this term means in practice, particularly within newer theologies like African theology and its outworking in worship. However we discover that it is not a new phenomenon but has been an unconscious process from the beginning of the Church's existence as it communicates the Gospel.

This thesis sets out to discover key principles of inculturation from a broad overview of the following: theology of culture; theology of worship; African theology and current liturgical development in Africa. These principles emerge as Incarnation, Mission and Dialogue.

There is a particular focus upon the new Service of Holy Communion in the Anglican Church in Kenya (ACK) as an example of inculturation as applied to Anglican liturgy. This liturgy is critiqued in the light of African theology and is found to contain all three of the principles.

The conclusion expresses the need for the Christian Church to take seriously both these inculturation principles and the theologies emerging from the so-called 'developing world'. The example of the ACK liturgy shows that the West which has dominated the expression of the Christian faith in sub-Saharan Africa for a century and a half, has much to learn about cultural relevance from this part of the continent and thus the direction of influence has been reversed.

30.6.99 Geraint Jones

LEARNING FROM AFRICA

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: AT ALL TIMES AND IN ALL PLACES[1]

From its birth, the Christian Church has been given the task of communicating the Gospel of Christ to the whole world and it could be said that it is a communicating faith *par excellence* as it has endeavoured in multiform ways to do this.
As the world in which the Gospel lives changes and evolves and as each culture responds to this change, so the method and means of communicating has to change aswell if the Gospel is to remain relevant to people's lives.

Fr. Vincent Donovan reflects this challenge in his book on his missionary endeavours to the Maasai people of Tanzania:
"When the gospel reaches a people where they are, their response to that gospel is the church in a new place, and the song they will sing is that new, unsung song, that unwritten melody that haunts all of us. What we have to be involved in is not the revival of the church or the reform of the church. It has to be nothing less that what Paul and the Fathers of the Council of Jerusalem were involved in for their time- the refounding of the Catholic church for our age."[2]

Rediscovering Christianity
It is twenty years ago since Fr. Vincent J. Donovan published his account of missionary work amongst the Maasai people in Tanzania. Here is a first-hand account of a Catholic missionary priest from the West who carefully brought the Christian gospel to the nomadic Maasai, in which he discovers that God 'had already been there' amongst these "pagan" people. The Church was being 'refounded' within Maasai life where the "naked gospel" and the "sacred arena of people's lives" met.[3]
As the gospel (*Ilomom Sidai*) continued to make its impact so the people themselves decided on the suitability of aspects of this life within their new-found faith in Christ as the Orporor, the Brotherhood of God. Donovan recalls a Mass among the evangelised Sonjo tribe (neighbours

1 Preface, First Eucharistic Prayer, *The Alternative Service Book 1980*, The Church of England,1984
2 Fr.Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered : An Epistle from the Maasai*, 1982, vii
3 Donovan 1982 op cit

of the Maasai and renowned dancers) who regarded the eucharist as a time for judgment on their music and dancing."They were not ashamed of that particular dance in their own lives, so they wanted that part of their lives to be offered with the Eucharist. There were some dances they were ashamed to bring into the eucharist. By that very fact, a judgment had been made on them. Such dances should no longer be part of their lives at all."[4]

Donovan insists from his experience among the Maasai that the communicating of the gospel is the concern of the missionary and the interpretation of the Gospel is the concern of the people who hear that Gospel. Furthermore he argues that the newly-received Gospel does not mean the imitation of the Western church which he regards as inward-looking and static. He looks around him in East Africa and comments that "despite some impressive indigenization carried out in certain areas, the African church, in order to be seen as respectable in the eyes of the western church, has incorporated some of the Western church's worst habits...By and large, the official African church still wears a European face."[5]

Rediscovering a missionary God

The nature of God is to send. Throughout Scripture there are accounts of people who have been sent by God to speak and act in his name- as leaders, prophets, community-builders... For the Christian this aspect of the nature of God is demonstrated in the most explicit way in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. To send his Son Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah into the geographical area around Lake Galilee, into Jewish culture and into the life of a carpenter's family is seen as the most profound act of love and reconciliation that God could have made with the world.

Since then the followers of *Yeshua ben Josef*, the Creator's Son and the carpenter's son, have also been sent into the world as the risen Christ's hands and feet to tell and live out the good news..."As the Father sent me, so I am sending you..."[6]

Rediscovering cultural context

4 Donovan 1982 op cit, 125
5 op cit, 177
6 John 20 :21

'Inculturation'[7] is a response to the post-modern Church's being sent to telling this good news to the world today. It formalises what has actually been happening since the first followers were sent and yet challenges the Church today to find new, effective ways of telling the world about its Saviour.

Our world today is often referred to as a 'global village' where the communication and information technology available enables one part of the world to seem very near to another. As we become global neighbours so our need to understand one another becomes more apparent and the acceptance of and work within the plurality of cultures becomes more urgent if there is to be effective communication of the Christian Gospel. The understanding of the world as global village is expressed in the first part of our working title '*Learning from* Africa', where there is a deliberate emphasis on the centre of this theological and liturgical study not being the West but Africa, in particular Kenya.

Discovering a balance of influence

I believe that the time has come when the Church- and in our particular study the Anglican Church- accepts the shifting centre of gravity from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere: to accept the fact that today the majority of worshipping Christians live in the South and that Eurocentric theology is no longer the theological norm for the rest of the world. The basic premise of this thesis is that the Church in the North and particularly the missionary churches of Europe has a lot to learn from the South, about the nature of God, our identity in Christ and what it means to be a worshipping community. The paternalism of the North and the dependency of the South is neither healthy for either, nor evidence of a truly living church since it does not allow for a full embrace of the Incarnation principle, which is outworked through the celebration of cultural identity which is also human identity. More importantly it belies the fundamental principle of all being made in the image of God .

The economic poverty of the South is likely to perpetuate this paternalism-dependency syndrome within the global economy but the Church of God does not, and should not, accept this relationship as the status quo. It is in the Church's self-understanding, reflected in its theology, worship and mission, that this status quo can be challenged and certainly not accepted or perpetuated. Inculturation as a theological and liturgical process therefore helps the

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7" Inculturation is the dynamic relation between th Christain message and culture or cultures; an insertion of the Christian life into a culture; an ongoing procress of reciprocal and critical interaction and assimilation between them." M. de Azevedo 1982 cited by G. Arbuckle *Earthing the Gospel* ,1990, 17

Church in this self-understanding.

My particular focus upon the Anglican Church in East Africa, namely Kenya, arises from a three-month placement I took whilst at theological college in which I experienced for the first time African worship, within the context of Anglican parishes and the Ruwe Church, an African Indigenous church.

During my stay in Kenya I became aware of an internal post-colonial guilt syndrome with an acute awareness of both the positive and negative influences of the colonial British Empire as a white British woman- which I freely admit has been a motivating factor to challenge the centuries-old trend of paternalism within the European Church towards Africa, by examining its own theology and liturgy in the light of inculturation .Another key motivating factor has been the profound depth and realism of faith which I witnessed among Kenyan Christians - particularly among women both young and old- which far surpassed anything I had experienced in Britain. Their faith and all it taught me demanded to be recognised formally.

Discovering principles of inculturation

Inculturation as a Christian theological and liturgical process is the interaction or dialogue between the Christian Gospel and the panoply of world cultures. Much has been written on the subject in recent years form various perspectives some of which we shall critique; however within all the detailed analyses that emerges from contemporary writing there is I think a particular need for some common *principles* of inculturation which can then be applied to whatever cultural situation the Church finds itself communicating the Gospel of Christ.

Thus the purpose of this study is to find common principles of inculturation that emerge from a broad study of theology of culture, worship and liturgy, with particular reference to sub-Saharan Africa and the Anglican Province in Kenya.

We will also see that inculturation, as part of the Church's missionary remit, challenges the Church to embrace the theological and liturgical principles of Incarnation, Mission and Dialogue, as well as affirm our theological and personal Identity in Christ, our Relationship with God, the world-wide Body of Christ and with culture and our Response to the Gospel through holistic mission and culturally appropriate worship. It is my hope that from these principles that the worldwide Church may be better equipped in its future ministry and mission and in its self-understanding as the Body of Christ within a plurality of cultures.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGY AND CULTURE: DIALOGUE FOR TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

The issue of the relationship between theology and culture is one that has been recurrent in the Christian church since it emerged from first century Judaism. The question whether theology and culture are mutually exclusive has been tackled by major theologians of each century, particularly when the prevailing culture as changed dramatically, for example Western theology after the Enlightenment.

The twentieth century has been no exception and the issues surrounding theology and culture have been brought into focus with historical world events and development: the two world wars; post-colonial independence within the developing world and the pervasion of capitalism and individualism in the "developed" world.

The centre of intellectual gravity in the West has gradually shifted from theocentric at the Reformation, through a science-based androcentricism at the Enlightenment and emerging into a post-modern, post-industrial centre with electrical communications at its core.[1]

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[1]David Lyon, *Postmodernity*, 1994, ch.4

In our post-modern world, although advances in telecommunication and travel have enabled this planet to **feel** smaller, they have also exposed its plurality and highlighted the stark differences of cultures and world-views, to which the Christian Church has had to respond, particularly if it is to be the Body of Christ, one body and many parts[1]. When awareness of difference between cultures is heightened as it is today through telecommunications and media, the challenge to the Christian Church to both celebrate and hold the differences becomes of greater significance. This is our challenge.

One of the leading Roman Catholic writers on culture and theology, Aylward Shorter, argues that if the Christian faith is to be genuine,"fully lived out..it must, in the words of Pope John Paul II, "become culture'...[that is] a plurality of cultures...only by identifying with this plurality can the Church become a world Church, instead of a culturally imperial Church." [2]

Shorter is critical of the Catholic Church in that he observes that in practice uniformity, instead of pluriformity, is seen as the means of unity in the Church...and thus remains imperialistic by definition.[3]

Shorter argues that it is the Church itself which has, within it, the major obstacles to evangelization and inculturation, the means to communicate the Gospel of Christ to the world. I would add that it is not just the Catholic Church that could be accused of uniformity but the Anglican Church as well...so the challenge of inculturation is pertinent for both these major world-wide denominations.

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1 1 Corinthians12

2 Aylward Shorter 1994, 82 cf .John Paul II, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 28 June 1982, 1-8

3 Shorter op cit, 82

1. Towards a Definition of Culture.

It is to the knowledge of art, philosophy or music that popular usage of the term "culture" is applied. Its use in this sense was borrowed from the French and is used especially of the 'upper' social classes.
There is an Anglicized perception (arguably due to the social class system in Britain) that those with 'culture' and those without have a large sociological gap between them, resulting in 'social climbing' of the latter. There is a sense, then, that 'culture' is to be achieved, from a negative or defensive position in order to 'progress'.

However, it is from the world of behavioural sciences that the Church should obtain a broad working definition of culture.
Edward Tylor, a nineteenth century anthropologist said that "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnological sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" [4]

A later definition by Kroeber and Kluckhohn expands the idea of culture as a "complex whole" :

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[4] Edward Tylor (1832-1917) *Primitive Culture,* 1871 cited by Choan- Seng Song, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement,* 257-259

"Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts [e.g. language, music, clothing, housing, food]; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action"[4]

One model that puts this complexity into a more comprehensible form is that of Linwood Barney (see Appendix).

i) Barney's Pyramid of Culture

Sociologist G. Linwood Barney[5] suggests that each culture is a series of layers, the deepest of which consists of ideology, cosmology and world-view. This layer could be seen as the base of a pyramid, the 'unseen' base, followed by cultural values; institutions, such as marriage, law, education and the apex layer of material artifacts, observable behaviour and customs. The apex layer is easily described and more easily changed than the other layers, which are more complex and less easy to define in their functional relationship to one another.

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[4] Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952, cited by Kraft 1979, 46

[5] For other primary models of culture, from a Christian perspective, see Kraft 1979, 54, 389-404, G. Arbuckle 1990, 28

Each layer interacts with the others, creating a "common integrative functional systematic whole" (Nicholls) or a "Shared Cognitive Orientation" (Barney).
Every model of culture has its limitations but we can see from this model how influential world-view and ideology are upon the culture. Religion interacts with each layer but is most influential on the base layer. Therefore, to communicate theology to another culture, one must understand the cultural world-view in order to have any influence on the more external expressions of that culture and to allow that culture to challenge theological statements that may be culture-bound.

Each socio-cultural group has its own patterns, its own cultural peculiarities which provide models of reality that govern our perception, although we are unlikely to be aware of the influence of our culture on us: "for the way we understand things seems to us to be 'just natural' or 'human nature'"[6]
The expressions of culture, this "integrated system of learned behavior patterns"[7] , are not the result of biological but historical inheritance, according to these definitions. We are born into a particular socio-cultural context, shaped by it, participate in communicating it, influence it and contribute to re-shaping it. [8]
Unless we are exposed to a variety of culturally determined conceptual frameworks and appreciate their different views of reality, we will regard other people's way of life as 'unnatural' or 'strange'...we will have an ethnocentric, or 'monocultural' perception of reality, which implies a 'superiority complex'.

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[6] Kraft 1979, 48
[7] Hoebel, 1972, cited by Kraft 1979, 46
[8] Kraft op cit, 47

Unless we realise that we are perceiving reality through the glasses of our own culture, any dialogue with another culture will be inadequate, if not impossible.

Allan Galloway, theologian, recognises this problem:

"We can ask the question of the nature of culture only from within culture. We can answer it only from the standpoint of our own involvement. This remains true even if we choose examples from cultures that are far removed from our own. We can know of these and interpret them **only** from the standpoint of our own situation within our own cultural heritage."[9]

Galloway's point is very important to have in mind when one begins to engage with another culture and for the purpose of this study and particularly African Theology I am very conscious of my Western standpoint.

2. Toward a Definition of Theology

One working definition of theology is less easy to find. *Theologia* (lit. 'the study of God) as a Greek term is not found in the New Testament but was adopted by Christian writes from the time of Origen to mean 'the gift of insight into the divine being'. In the English-speaking world today, as Stephen Sykes suggests, the term theology would

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9. Galloway, 1976, 7

now widely be taken to refer to the rational account given of Christian faith, as furnished by a series of sub-disciplines such a biblical studies, church history etc*[9a]

i) Christ's own culture

Christian theology has its roots in the cultures of the Old and New Testamental periods and Daniel Jenkins suggests that much of what is distinctive in Christian faith emerges from its dialogue with human culture[10] .

He suggests that this was "self-consciously grasped from the beginning of the Christian story", that the first account of creation in Genesis "can be legitimately thought of as the imposition by God of an order, which implies a cultural pattern, upon primeval chaos".[11]

When Israel settles in the promised land, it "becomes vulnerable to the cultural complacency which besets all settled societies" and that Israel's faith was in danger, which the prophets saw, of turning into a self-enclosed religion with the Law, kingship and cultus but no longer dependent on Yahweh for direction.[12]

Jesus was born into the community of Israel, the house of David[13] and he discovered and defined his own task as Jenkins puts it, "through sustained meditation upon the

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9a Stephen Sykes, *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* 1 983,137
10 Daniel Jenkins *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* 137
11 Jenkins op cit,137
12 Jenkins op cit,138
13 cf.Luke 1:36, Matt 1:20

meaning of the tradition of Israel. Yet all this led him to *reject* the cultural forms through which Israel expressed her distinctive identity in his time."[14]
Indeed, many of the Jews of Jesus' day rejected *him* in the name of their culture and throughout Christian history people have rejected Christ because they saw in him a threat to their culture.[14a]

In attacking the complacency of faith shown by the Jewish people, exemplified by those whose observable behaviour did not reflect the true Jewish world-view, Jesus provides in his teaching and ministry and to the Christian believer his death and resurrection, a fulfilment of the Jewish world-view which, in time, actually became a new 'Christian' world-view.

ii) The Circumcision Debate: a New Testament clash of cultures?

The Apostle Paul was acutely aware of the break with the cultural tradition of the 'old' Israel and had to deal with practical implications such as the Mosaic practice of circumcision for Gentile Christians in Acts 15.
This practice was seen by some Jewish Christians as necessary to salvation and such an argument threatened the unity of the early Christians.[15] The Christian council resolved

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[14] Jenkins op cit [Italics mine]
[14a] cf. Niebuhr 1952, 18-20
[15] F.F.Bruce comments that "It is not clear whether 'necessary' means 'necessary for salvation absolutely' or 'necessary for recognition by and fellowship with Jewish Christians'. Probably these Pharisees would have considered this a distinction without a difference."
The New Bible Commentary Revised,1970, 992

this dispute by affirming salvation through grace (Acts 15:11) and not enforcing circumcision on Gentile Christians. (Acts 15:19-20)

This example of a clash between the Jewish and Gentile cultures, as well as an understanding of the Law in the light of the New Covenant in Christ, within early Christianity highlights the difficulties that the Christian Church has faced as the Gospel has moved into different cultural groups and the way in which the Council dealt with it can offer some insights into present-day situations:

i) There was active **dialogue** with the proponents of Gentile circumcision at grassroots level (v2).

The principle of dialogue by the Council was used to reconcile the cultural and theological differences raised by the circumcision issue. Furthermore the dialogue was 'at source' where the differences impacted the most. As we shall see later, this principle continues to be important when the Church tries to engage with particular cultures.

ii) The issues were taken to the church leadership for them to discuss, but in the light of the success of Gentile conversions.

The Gospel of Christ is often uncomfortable to the recipient culture and when those within a culture accept Christ, the Church sometimes has to re-think its self-understanding... it is moved out of a place of complacency into a place of real, two-way communication with that culture.

iii) The fundamental principle of being **identified with Christ** through faith was affirmed.

Above all else, both the Jewish and the Gentile Christians had a new identity in Christ (2 Cor 5:17, 1 John 3:1,2) which also gave them a new relationship with one another as part of the Body of Christ (I Cor 12:27). This was their unifying principle in this cultural debate and has remained so ever since. It has been reflected upon particularly in the discussion about theology and culture.

iv) Other outward disciplines that **affirmed the Jewish heritage** were also affirmed (v20).

There are some cultural elements that will be discarded when they come into contact with transforming love of Christ and there are some others that will remain. This is a case in point. and ever since, the Church has had to hold this fact in tension.

3. Christ and Culture: Niebuhr's theological model.

For theology to interact with culture effectively, for Christianity to reflect the culture that it is in, there needs to be dialogue with the culture at grassroots level, dialogue within the Church and affirmation of the basic Christian world-view or 'universal Gospel' within another world-view. However, the praxis of these principles is less

simple since there is not **one** theology or **one** Christian world-view at any time in Christian history.

In his influential work,*Christ and Culture* in 1952, American theologian H. Richard Niebuhr studied the history of Christianity and discerned five ways or types by which the Christian church addressed itself, at different times, to the complex relationship between the Christian faith and culture: each type not seen as self-contained but often overlapping with the others.

He acknowledges the great variety of views of what it means to believe in Jesus Christ but maintains that a "fundamental unity..is supplied by the fact that the Jesus Christ to whom [women and men] are related in such different ways is a definite character and person whose teachings, actions and sufferings are of one piece... However great the variations among Christians in experiencing and describing the authority Jesus Christ has over them, they have this in common: that Jesus Christ is their authority, and that the one who exercises these various kinds of authority is the same Christ."[16]

So within this unity-in-variety, Niebuhr suggests five types, recurrent in Christian history:

i) Christ against Culture or Radical Christianity

ii) The Christ of Culture or Cultural Christianity

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[17] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, Faber & Faber, London, 1952, 27/28

iii) Christ above Culture or Synthesist Christianity

iv) Christ and Culture in Paradox or Dualist Christianity

v) Christ the Transformer of Culture or Conversionist Christianity[17]

i) Christ against Culture

This position is one "that uncompromisingly affirms the sole authority of Christ over the Christian and resolutely rejects culture's claim to loyalty."[19]
Niebuhr's exegesis of 1 John illustrates this position : although the writer of 1 John makes a positive statement of loving God and one's neighbour because of God's love shown to us in Christ (1 John 4), there is an equally emphatic negative statement about **who** is our 'neighbour': "a clear line of separation is drawn between the brotherhood of the children of God and the world." [20] The word 'world' is understood as the whole society outside the church, a world under the power of the evil one in which believers live.

"It [the world] is a culture that is concerned with temporal and passing values, whereas Christ has words of eternal life... faith in him is the victory which overcomes the world."[21]

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[18] See D. Hesselgrave1978 , 81 for a visual model of Niebuhr's typology.
[19] Niebuhr 1952 ,58
[20] Niebuhr 1952, 60, cf. 1 John 2:15-16
[21] Niebuhr 1952, 61, cf. 1 John 3:8; 5;4-5 ;1 John 5:19

Loyalty lies in the new, victorious society in and over which is the Lord, Jesus Christ and so involvement with the 'world' is minimalised. This can be described as 'radical Christianity' and has been particularly evident at times of great political, economic or religious upheaval.[22] Often radical Christians "withdraw, reject, escape, isolate and insulate themselves from the world in order to develop and maintain holiness."[23]

One of this type's early proponents was Tertullian (c.155-225) who replaced the warm ethics of love in 1 John with a largely negative morality, seeing culture as the residence for sin.[24] Tertullian was particularly against social, pagan religion which infiltrated the activities and institutions of society and which could compromise the loyalty of the believer to Christ. [25]

This meant that Tertullian was against Christian involvement in politics, Greek philosophy, teaching literature and the performing arts but "he could not in fact emancipate himself and the church from reliance on and participation in culture, pagan though it was."[26]

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[22] For example, the Anabaptist movement at the Reformation; the Shaker and the Oneida communities during the rapid economic expansion of nineteenth century America.

[23] Kraft 1979, 105

[24] Niebuhr 1952, 65

[25] There are modern-day equivalents of pagan religion e.g. freemasonry , which have infiltrated society's institutions, including the Church and which raise similar questions about loyalty. For further discussion: John Lawrence, *Freemasonry- a way of salvation?* 1982

[27] Niebuhr 1952, 67

Niebuhr cites Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) who also argued that the state and Christian faith are incompatible, and that there is no such thing as a 'good government'[27] since it is based on love of power and exercise of violence[27]. He also regarded churches as "self-centred organizations that assert their own fallibility... all the churches are alike in their betrayal of Christ's law".[28] Tolstoy advocated complete non-participation in state, church and economic affairs in order to follow the law of Christ.

The eschatalogical dimension is often very important and Niebuhr asks whether they are convinced of the nearness of the kingdom of God and are governed by this conviction [e.g. millenialists], or whether they think of it as relatively remote in time or space and relatively ineffective in power.[29]

Niebuhr's theological objections to this type are an elevation of revelation against human reason but often with a distinction made between revelation by the spirit or 'inner light' and that by history through Scriptures. With Tertullian and Tolstoy there is also a distinction between 'natural knowledge' of the uncorrupted human soul and perverted understanding within culture.[30]

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[26] cf Tolstoy, *Works*, Vol XX, pp. 275f in Niebuhr 1952, 72
[27] Niebuhr op cit, 72
[28] op cit, 73
[29] op cit, 76
[30] op cit, 88

The most difficult theological problem that this type presents is "the relation of Christ to the Creator of nature and the Governor of history as well as to the Spirit immanent in creation and in the Christian community."[31]

Missiologist Charles Kraft [32] asserts that this type is erroneous, firstly in its understanding of the Johannine 'world' (*kosmos* Gk.), that it is used to refer to a particular **use** of that culture by the forces of evil instead of using the culture for God. Secondly, there is an assumption that culture is **only** external and that **all** of culture is evil.

To be 'in the world but not of the world'[33] is the commission of Christ to his followers. However, the Christ Against Culture type takes it to the extreme and eliminates any possibility of communication between theology and culture.

ii) The Christ of Culture

This type contrasts sharply with the previous type in that its adherents interpret culture through Christ and understand Christ through culture.

"They feel no great tension between church and world, the social laws and the Gospel, the workings of divine grace and human effort, the ethics of salvation and the ethics of

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31 Niebuhr, 1952 op cit, 91
32 Kraft 1979, 105/6
33 cf. John 17

social conservation or progress."[34] Furthermore "they do not necessarily seek Christian sanction for the whole of prevailing culture, but only for what they regard as real in the actual; in the case of Christ they try to disentangle the rational and the abiding from the historical and accidental."[35]

Transcendence is continuous with the present: thus Christ is often seen as the great educator and Neibuhr cites Abelard (1079-1142). who sees Jesus as "the great enlightener... the one who directs all [women and men] in culture to the attainment of wisdom, moral perfection and peace."[36]
Christ, the great reformer, is exemplified in the Social Gospel movement which focussed on social and cultural action: "The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man."[37] Jesus' identification with his own culture is affirmed, but a criticism of this type is "that culture is so various that the Christ of culture becomes a chameleon."[38]

Niebuhr's theological objections to this type are over-accomodation of culture, creating an 'all-purpose' Christ and having reason as the road to knowledge of God and salvation, with revelation relegated to a process of growth of reason.

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34 Niebuhr 1952, 93
35 op cit, 94
36 op cit, 101
37 op cit, 109
38 op cit, 115

"The spiritualism and idealism of cultural Christianity meets its challenge in naturalism; and sometimes it discovers that it has hold on only a third of the truth when it says that God is Spirit."[39]

iii) Christ Above Culture

This, Niebuhr refers to as the "church of the centre."[40] Its characteristics are an obligation of humanity to be obedient to God; certain harmony of conviction about the universality and radical nature of sin (for example, the use of the sacraments) and synthesis with distinction and "paradoxical conviction" that Jesus is both God and man, one person with two natures.[41]

This is a 'synthesist' view, i.e. affirming both Christ and culture, confessing a Lord who is both of this world and and of the other. Clement of Alexandria and Thomas Aquinas fall into this category. To deny human nature and culture in order to obey Christ is to deny the commandments to love, of which the social institutions are instruments, therefore there has to be "some sort of reconciliation between Christ and culture without denial of the other"[42]

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[39] Niebuhr, 1952, 122
[40] op cit, 124
[41] op cit 125-7
[42] op cit, 147

This often results in a high ecclesiology, with the danger that the effort to synthesize leads to the institutionalization of Christ and the gospel.[43]

iv) Christ and Culture in Paradox

This is another 'both-and' group but where the emphasis is upon the grace of God revealed in Christ. This dualist position affirms culture in that one belongs to it and cannot get out of it, that God sustains one in it and by it; for if God in His grace did not sustain the world in its sin it would not exist for one moment.[44]

Characteristically, social institutions are seen as restraining wickedness in the world and not the embodiment of it and culture seen as necessary if transitory.

Those whom Niebuhr includes in this category are the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther and Ernst Troeltsch. Luther, for example, is an 'interactionist' believing in a "gospel of faith in Christ working by love in the world of culture"[45].

For Troeltsch, "earthly history [i.e. cultural history] remains the foundation and the presupposition of the final personal decision and sanctification... a mixture of reason and natural instinct."[46]

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[43] N iebuhr, 1952, 151

[44] op cit, 161. It is a paradoxical position of being under law **and** grace, being a sinner **and** righteous and God revealing Himself in Christ yet remaining hidden

[45] op cit, 181

[46] op cit, 184

The positive aspects of this type are that the dynamic character of God, humanity, sin and grace are taken into account and there is an ethics of freedom, of creative action in response to God's action upon humanity. On the minus side, there are the dangers of antinomianism and cultural conservatism.[47]

v) Christ the Transformer of Culture

This 'conversionist' type has a more positive and hopeful attitude towards culture than the previous dualists. Culture is defined as all corrupted order rather than order for corruption.[48]

Its proponents include Augustine, Calvin and Wesley.

Of Augustine, Niebuhr writes: "The good nature of [humanity] has been corrupted and [its] culture has become perverse in such fashion that corrupt nature produces perverse culture and perverse culture corrupts nature."[49]

"Eternal life is a quality of existence in the here and now"[50] conversionists say: there is less preparation for the future kingdom of God than the divine possibility of present renewal.

Theologian Daniel Jenkins suggests that conversionists are in danger of cultural conservatism and theocracy leading to a repressive or 'soft-centred' culture-Christianity unless there is a prophetic challenge, risk and radical eschatology with it.

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[47] op cit, 188
[48] op cit, 196
[49] op cit, 211

"Christian experience through history suggests that a healthy relation cannot exist between faith and all forms of culture, including 'Christian' culture without a measure of tension."[51]

Niebuhr's 'Radical Monotheism'

The questions about the choices and responsibility Christians have in their cultural setting are clearly raised in Niebuhr's typology. He adds that there is also relativity in the conclusions that individuals make, depending on the knowledge, faith/unbelief, historical position and social duties that they have.[52] Niebuhr suggests, however, that Christ has to be the **absolute** with this relativity and that existential as well as relative decisions are made by Christians within a relational context.[53]

He argues that the basis of reason is faith which has been introduced into our culture through the historical reality of Christ; that faith exists only in a community of selves in the presence of a transcendent cause; that Jesus' historical reality in human history is a given and that there is a church of faith (not a single individual, group or historical time) in which we do our partial, relative work[54] .

Niebuhr's aim is to understand the historical relativism of Ernst Troeltsch in the light of theological and theocentric relativism. He later describes this as 'radical monotheism':

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50 Niebuhr 1952, 197
51 Jenkins 1983, 140
52 Niebuhr 1952, 237/8
53 op cit, 237-242

"its reference is to no one reality among the many but to the One beyond the many, whence all the many derive their being, and by participation in which they exist."[55] Niebuhr appreciates the different forms of Christian belief and community and his radical monotheism suggests that they, together with other systems of belief, all must be in some way related, that there must be some commonality in their approach to the human problem in order for Christianity to be relatively adequate.[56]

4. Paul Tillich: A Philosophy of Culture

Theologian **Paul Tillich** in *Theology of Culture* (1959) offers a different, more philosophical approach, re-defining the issue of relations between Christianity and culture on the broader basis of religion and culture.

" Religion is not a special function of [humanity's] spiritual life, but is the dimension of depth in all of its functions...i.e. that which is ultimate, infinite, unconditional [humanity's] spiritual life. Religion, in the largest and most basic sense of the word, is ultimate concern."[57]

Tillich sees the religious and secular realm in the same predicament. "Neither of them should be in separation from the other, and both should realise that their existence as

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54 Niebuhr 1952, 250-253

55 Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture,* New York, 1970, 32, cited in D. Ford (Ed.)*The Modern Theologians, vol II,* ch.3, 83

56 op cit

57 Paul Tillich1959, 7/8

separated is an emergency, that both of them are rooted in religion in the larger sense of the word, in the experience of ultimate concern."[58]

"Religion," he writes," is the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion,"[59] which is expressed in forms such as language or religious art.
Every religious act is culturally formed, because it is expressing 'ultimate concern'. The role of theology, he argues, is to confront the "immense and profound material of the existential analysis in all cultural realms" and not use this material by simply accepting it but to "confront it with the answer implied in the Christian message"[60]

Tillich perceives the Church's function as answering the question of the meaning of existence through the appearance of a new healing reality; having symbols that are culturally relevant and having a prophetic role in revealing the dynamic structures in society, undercutting their demonic power by revealing them, even if its within the Church.[61]
He adds that by doing this, the Church listens to the prophetic voices outside itself, judging both the culture and the Church in so far as it is a part of the culture; these voices are of the "latent," not the manifest, Church, for example, political movements.[62]
Tillich lays a foundation for dialogue between the Church and the culture within which it may find itself, on the basis that the culture, however alien or critical it may be in

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58 Tillich, 1959, 9
59 op cit, 42
60 op cit, 49
61 op cit, 50
62 op cit, 51

relation to the Church, has a voice to be heard. Furthermore, the kingdom of God includes both Church and culture while transcending both.[63]
The Church has to **communicate** by **participating** in the culture otherwise it can become a'stumbling block' to the Gospel.[64]

Langdon Gilkey takes Tillich's theological mantle and develops it . Gilkey asserts a "divine covenant with modernity" in order to do theology: "the eternal message, the presence of the divine, is always received into a given cultural "situation", interpreted from and through that situation, and expressed in its terms...Each one of these situations... fashions the message into its own recognisable form; and each one obscures some elements of the message and uncovers other elements."[65]

Gilkey highlights both the intelligiblity and mystery that both the cultural situation (and the Church within that situation) can bring to the Gospel message through theology and also worship. The dialogue between Church and culture therefore has to be continuous in order for the Church to know what it is obscuring and to what extent the culture is fashioning the message into its 'own recognisable form...'

Gilkey adds that dialogue between theology and culture is only possible when it "is founded theologically on a strong doctrine of general revelation, a clear sense of the relativity of all that has been characteristic of our own religion and culture as human

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63 Tillich 1959, 51
64 op cit, 213
65 Langdon Gilkey,*Society and the Sacred,* 1981,165/6

forms and a respect and gratitude for the elements of genuine revelation that can come to us out of the "covenant" that God has made with them[i.e. other religious forms]- as well as the one which we trust forms our standpoint [i.e. Christ]."[66]
Thus he advocates a supra cultural Gospel, or, in Neibuhr's typology, 'Christ above Culture'.

5. Charles Kraft: An Ethnotheological Approach

Charles Kraft in *Christianity in Culture* (1979) takes an ethnotheological approach to the relations between theology (with particular concern for missiology) and culture, from a personal background of anthropology and practical theology. Kraft adopts the anthropological and linguistic models of form and function, meaning and usage to understand the concept of culture:

i) The **forms** of culture are the "observable parts of which it is made up" i.e. customs arranged in patterns and the product of those customs observable in material items, such as housing and clothing and non-material concepts, such as family structures and singing."Cultural forms in and of themselves are **static**."[67]

ii) The **functions** of culture are general and universal but also specifically related to non-universal, individual and group concern. Some cultural forms serve several

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[66] Gilkey 1981,167

functions at once, general and specific; however, the participants in the culture may or may not be aware of the functions served by any given cultural form.[68]

iii) The **meaning** of culture is "the totality of subjective associations attached to the form... What a given custom means is determinable only from an observation of its functions and uses within its specific cultural context."[69]
"There are apparently no cultural forms that convey exactly the same meanings in any two different cultures... many (if not all) of the forms of culture will signify (mean) at least some different things to different individuals and groups within the culture."[70]

iv) The **usage** of forms, functions and meaning within a culture are usually routinized through the process of culture learning within a relatively fixed range of variation allowed by the traditions of the culture and within this range room for the individual and subgroup variations in most customs.[71]

Having established these distinctions, Kraft builds an alternative cultural type to those given by Niebuhr: God above-but-through culture.
This type is based on the concept of a relationship between God and culture that sees God as above culture but as using culture as the vehicle for interaction with human

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67 Charles Kraft, 1979, 64 [my emphasis].
68 op cit, 65
69 Louis Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures* (1963), 139 in Kraft 1979, 65
70 Kraft, 65 cf. Eugene Nida, *Message and Mission* (1960), 89-90
71 Kraft 1979, 65

beings. Cultural structuring is **neutral** in essence, though warped by the pervasive influence of human sinfulness.[72]

Culture, its form and function, is in and of itself spiritually neutral, but is "something that is there to be used by personal beings such as humans, God and Satan."[73]
Human beings are pervasively infected by sin which results in their usage of cultural forms and functions always being affected by sin, which consequently affects the meanings intended and received. However, humans are redeemable, transformable: "when groups of people undergo such transformation, more pervasive changes maybe made both in use and in structuring [of culture]. When such transformation takes place as a result of a relationship with God, we may speak of the influence of God on culture."[74]

For Kraft, God **chooses** the cultural milieu in which humans are immersed as the arena of his interaction with people, although God exists totally outside of culture and at major points limits himself to the capacities of that culture.[75]
Kraft is a Christian apologist (like Niebuhr and Tillich) and sees Christian theology in the "supracultural" functions and meanings expressed in culture (**not** the particular cultural forms).
He adapts Smalley's definition of "supracultural" as being a term to signify the transcendence of God with respect to culture, including any **absolute** principles or

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72 op cit, 113
73 op cit
74 op cit, 114

functions proceeding from God's nature, attributes or activities.[76] Kraft specifies God as the 'supracultural' absolute; angels, demons and Satan as the 'supracultural' non-absolute and the cultural as non-absolute.

Can we know supracultural truth? Kraft thinks we can because of God's revelation of himself within the Bible. He is against absolute relativism, but for a 'relative (biblical) cultural relativism'. This is based upon the factors of human endowment and opportunities (i.e. a positive view of human capabilities within their inherent sinfulness); the extent of God's revelation, particularly demonstrated in the Old and New Testament writings and the cultural patterns of the given culture which God takes into account.[77]

However, in his attempt to hold anthropology and theology in balance, Kraft appears to contradict himself about relativism when he writes that "a cultural form does not have inherent meaning, only perceived meaning -and this is context-specific."[78]

If, on the other hand, the non-absolute cultural form has working within it the absolute supracultural i.e. God, how can we tell what is supracultural truth and what isn't?

If culture (form, function, meaning and usage) is continually changing, particularly from political, economic or social influences, then doesn't a cultural-relative theology become a 'chameleon' theology?

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[75] Kraft 1979, 115

[76] Kraft op cit, 120
cf. W.A. Smalley, *A Christian View of Anthropology,* in *Modern Science and Christian Faith* 1948 and 'Culture and Superculture' in *Practical Anthropology* 2: 58-71, 1955.

[77] Kraft op cit,125-127

6. African Theology : A response to African culture

In a similar way, the emergence of African theology in the early post-independence period from the late 1950's to the late 1980's has reflected a growing awareness that the forms of Christianity and its accompanying culture communicated in the missionary period are no longer culturally appropriate.
African theology has as its main concern the Christian faith and African culture and tradition, particularly pre-Christian religious experience.

In 1910, the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, which operated under the prevailing European value-setting for the Christian faith, concluded that Africa's primal religions "contained no preparation for Christianity."[79] These primal religions are now of central importance in African theology as they are part of Africa's cultural heritage, religious consciousness and identity.

It is the issue of Christian **identity** in Africa today that is an issue of integrity of self, faith and culture. Thus the quest for African Christian theologies, according to Fashole-Luke, "amounts to attempting to make clear the fact that conversion to Christianity must be coupled with cultural continuity."[80]

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[78] op cit, 137
[79] *The Missionary message in relation to non-Christian religions- The World Missionary Conference 1910- report of Commission IV*, Edinburgh and London,1910, p 24 cited by Kwame Bediako: 'Understanding African Theology in the 20th century', Oct 1994, 15
[80] E. Fashole-Luke: 'The Quest for an African Christian Theology' *The Ecumenical Review*,

For cultural continuity to happen, there has to be a "theological consciousness" which presupposes religious tradition; the memory of the tradition and with the memory, identity. In Africa this means filling the theological vacuum left by Western value-setting which under-estimated the African's sense and knowledge of God. It also means responding to the world-view of the continuing primal religions which is still a reality for many African Christians and rejecting such terms as 'primitive' or 'animist' religion.

Within African Theology there are divergences in the interpretation of 'continuity' between African primal religions (and other expressions of African cultures) and theology.

Bolaji Idowu makes a case for "radical indigenisation of the Church" to remedy the predicament of dependence resulting from Western cultural dominance by building bridges to the 'revelation' found in the pre-Christian religious traditions.[81] This can result in the old religions minimilising the newness of Christianity, with their God-given heritage of indigenous spiritual and cultural treasures.
Byang Kato, by comparison, traced his spiritual heritage mainly to the Western Faith Missions in Africa.[82] Kato based himself on radical biblicism, upholding 'Bible truth'

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vol 27:3, 267 cited by Bediako, 1994 op cit.
81 Bolaji Idowu, *Towards an Indigenous Church,* 1965, 26; 'The predicament of the Church in Africa', *Christianity in Tropical Africa,*1968, pp 415-440 in Bediako 1994, 16.
82 Byang Kato, *Theological Pitfalls in Africa,* 1975, 169 in Bediako 1994,16
83 Bediako, op cit

and rejecting any theology that was a synthesis of 'old' and 'new'. However, this theological approach denied any dialogue with African tradition.

Theologians such as Harry Sawyerr and John Mbiti took the middle ground, finding integrity in both African traditional religion and African Christianity and .the latter seen not as intrinsically foreign to Africa. The theological language is that of the Christian gospel 'encountering' African culture rather than 'indigenizing' Christianity.

Bediako argues that the Bible translation work of the Western missionaries "could probably be regarded as the single most important element of the Western missionary legacy in Africa... [ensuring] that there did take place an effectual rooting of the Christian faith in African consciousness."[83]

This, he argues, has ensured that dialogue between theology and African tradition can be 'authentic'in the sense of local languages, idioms and world-views and that Christianity can be 'translatable'. He also makes the interesting point that African theology's focus on the centrality of primal religions can be an example to the Western Church in taking European primal religions (e.g. paganism) seriously in order to understand Christian identity in a new way.
Bediako emphasises the theological need to retain the 'sense' of the spiritual world of primal religions as well as 'encounter' the primal world-view.

7. Approaching a theology of culture

There has been, since the political independence of ex-colonies in Latin America, Africa and Asia, a decline in the confidence of a universal validity from one culture i.e. modern Western culture and from these countries has emerged new theologies as they have come to terms with their post-independence cultures.
"Grassroots' culture is meeting theology which is resulting in more culturally authentic Christianity and, in one sense, the 'tables are turned' on western Christian culture to learn from these newer theological approaches. The Church has been challenged to re-think not only the content of the Christian message, but the vehicle through which the message is communicated: itself.

Allan Galloway challenges the Church's relations with different cultural forms:
"The relation of the Christian faith to this variety of cultural forms will not be settled by mere tinkering with traditional forms of Christian expression as they have been nurtured in Europe... The situation challenges us to break out of our purely parochial concerns and think again as a world church."[84]

He acknowledges the contemporary danger of dissipation of the "essential gospel" because culture is changing so fast, not least where cultures seem to be merging. However,when the Church was expanding in the syncretistic culture of the late Roman

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84 Allan Galloway, *Faith in Changing Culture*, 1967, 8

Empire, the situation was overcome, not by "ecclesiastical caution but by prophetic rigour... [not] ecclesiastical rigor mortis."[82]

Thus the Church today is challenged to be "re-founded', its institutions and structures re-shaped, a change of method, a spiritual renewal...
Aylward Shorter describes such a Church as a"culturally polycentric Church, a *koinonia* Church... that is really convinced of the value of dialogue. It is a Church convinced that evangelization is a two-way, not one-way process. It is a Church that recognizes its Master's voice when he speaks from other cultures and faith traditions... that is humble enough to reflect deeply on its encounter with 'otherness' and even to rethink the formulation of its own message in the light of this encounter."[83]
Such an approach is found in the theological process called 'inculturation'.

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[83] Galloway 1967, 95
[83] Shorter1994, 118

CHAPTER THREE

AFRICAN THEOLOGY: AN EXAMPLE OF THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CULTURE AND THEOLOGY

1. Introduction: Christianity being at home in Africa

"Since the Gospel of Christ is universally true and capable of making its home in all cultures, there is no reason why it cannot have a permanent home in Africa."[1]

"The [Christian] faith can be meaningful only when Christ is encountered as speaking and acting authentically, when he is heard in the African languages, when culture 'shapes the human voice that answers the voice of Christ'. To put this in another way, Christ must be heard to speak to African Christians *direct*."[2]

"We can no longer neglect patterns of our [African] way of life, which by and large, have grown out of our non-Christian religious past. The future of Christianity in any part of Africa will largely depend on how well we can graft the realities of this our religious cultural past on the vitality of the Christian present."[3]

We have already ascertained that the dialogue between theology and culture is one that is not new to the Christian Church cf. Acts 15 and has not lost its complexity since then[4]. The dialogue has been ongoing and raised itself at every significant point in the Church's history. Indeed it could be argued that the whole history of the Church is a history of the dialogue between faith in Christ and the culture from which the faithful come and in which they live.

As we have noted in chapter 2, Christian theology is not created in a cultural vacuum or

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1 D.W.Waruta "The educational mission of the Church: An African Perspective", *Mission in African Christianity*, 1993, 128

2 Kwesi Dickson, *Theology in Africa* ,1984, 5

3 Edmund Ilogu, Preface:*Christianity and Igbo Culture*, 1974, pxv

4 See chapter 2.

incubator, free from the harmful or otherwise influences of the world around but has often been stimulated and transformed by the events of the surrounding culture.[5] The dialogue between theology and culture challenges the Church to be what it is, the Body of Christ, the biblical paradox of many parts united in purpose[6] with the underlying issues of the Church's identity in Christ, the communication of this identity in relationship with the world around and the Church's response in mission to the world.

In 1970 David Barrett estimated that by 2000 AD there would be 350 million Christians in Africa[7] and that the general growth in the churches, in particular Pentecostal and Evangelical churches, in the developing world including Africa is causing a 'modern shift in the centre of gravity of Christianity'[8] which the Western Church cannot ignore. African Theology is part of that shift of gravity.

The development of African Theology in the past thirty years has shown to take its cultural context very seriously, often starting with the cultural milieu within modern African society and asking the underlying question about how one can be truly Christian and truly African[9] . As with other local theologies it is in and of itself a challenge to Eurocentric theology and raises the question of the universality of the Christian Gospel. Isn't there just one Gospel, translatable to all cultures as Waruta has suggested? Don't such new, culturally-based theologies with their non-Western presuppositons jeopardise this unity of the Christian Church?

American missiologist David Bosch argues for a theology of mission in a Church that celebrates both local and universal, having unity within reconciled diversity. "It is true that the church exists primarily in *particular* churches, but it is also true that it is *in virtue of the*

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5 During the Protestant Reformation the cultural changes not only enabled theology to be more widely 'heard' through technological advances but challenged the Christian Church to respond to such changes as the growing secularism of the Renaissance,divorcing monarchs, the rise and fall of Empires etc.

6 cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:4. At the end of the twentieth century there is, perhaps more than any time in the Church's history, a diversity of theologies- Ecumenical, Liberation, Asian, African, Black, Feminist- which challenges both traditional Western theology in its presuppositions and the worldwide Church to reassess what it means to be 'one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28).

7 David Barrett, International Review of Mission, Jan 1970 cited by Patrick Johnstone ,*Operation World*, OM Publishing, Carlisle, 1993, 36

8 Kwame Bediako in the Epilogue in Ype Schaaf, *On their Way Rejoicing*: *The History and Role of the Bible in Africa*, 1994, 244

9 cf Elochukwu Uzukwu *Truly Christian Truly African* Spearhead No. 74

church's catholicity that particular churches exist...If the church is the body of Christ it can only be one...it is a kind of "universal hermeneutical community, in which Christians and theologians from different lands check one another's cultural biases."[10]

However both the local and the universal church respond in mission to the universal message of the Gospel. "Particularity does not mean isolation; so, even if we may celebrate local theologies, let us remember that it is equally true that "any theology is a discourse about a universal message."[11]

However full ecumenism is still an ideal and there is a North-South division in the Church within which there is a rapid development of 'particular' theologies in the South and a hermeneutical community that is still dominated by the North. Even if theological exchange programmes are established between the churches in the North and the South, as Bosch suggests, to create a 'theological osmosis'[12], the global questions within the dialogue between theology and culture continue. What is supracultural within the Christian faith? Is there a 'Gospel culture' that knows no cultural boundaries?

2. African Theology in practice: a remit

A form of liberation theology

"Theological reflection must help people see the need to rid themselves of the inhibiting attitude of passivity and fatalism.They are enabled to trust in their own ability to bring the necessary change. Only then can they begin to struggle for self-reliance and freedom."[13]

African theologian Zablon Nthamburi affirms that theology that claims to liberate cannot afford to alienate and African Theology has been rightly been regarded as a form of liberation theology in its conscious and highly critical departure from Eurocentric theology to be a theology of self-hood, doing justice to the *African's* humanity and God-given ways of life, although the political outworkings of this theology have yet to have similar impact to Latin American

10 Hiebert "The Missiological Implications of an Epistemological Shift", *Theological Students Fellowship Bulletin, March 1985*,16 cited by David Bosch *Transforming Mission* 1991, 457

11 G. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, 1988 cited by Bosch 1991 op cit, 457,

12 Bosch 1991, op cit, 456

13 Patrick Kalilombe cited by Z. Nthamburi *African Ecclesial Reiew* 1985,33

liberation theology.

Across the theological spectrum African theologians agree that there is a conscious departure from Western theological dominance.Evangelical theologian Kwesi Dickson in *Theology in Africa* challenges the notion that theology is normative from the West to which every continent has to submit .

"It cannot be seriously argued that in the interests of a uniformity of theological expression, and as a symbol of the oneness of the Church, the theological insights emanating from the West should be considered normative also outside the West."

Dickson also challenges the idea that there could even be a normative African Theology: "it has been suggested that Africa is more likely to produce theologies rather than a theology, given the great variety of religio-cultural, social and political realities in this vast continent."[14]

If African theology is a form of liberation theology then where is its motivation? Is it a*bone fide* African grassroots movement or is it a chance for Western-trained African theologians to try to reconcile conflicting ideologies from within the missionary-initiated Church in sub Saharan Africa? I would argue that it can be both but as African theology develops within the noted shift of gravity from North to South, with more theologians educated in their local theologies the theological independence from the West will grow organically together with modes of worship and liturgy.

3. What is African culture?

As we have seen already in Chapter 2, to define 'culture 'is a complex task and to try to define African culture as if it were a single entity is impossible for a continent made up of hundreds, if not thousands, of different ethnic groups, religions and languages.

African philosopher A.Ekwunife[15] cites several problems in establishing a definition of African culture: firstly the vastness of the continent with its multiple ethnic groups; secondly, the forces of social change in the forms of Christianity, Islam, colonialism, modern technology and

[14]E. Fashole-Luke cited by Kwesi Dickson , 1976,op cit, 2 [italics mine]

15 A. Ekwunife "African Culture: A Definition" in *African Christian Studies CHIEA, Sept 1978*, 5-18

urbanisation creating "the home of hybrids of cultures"[16] and thirdly, the difficulty of being objective about a definition, with the accompanying danger of absolutizing any definition however multi-disciplinary and scholarly."Every culture is of its nature dynamic, this dynamism evolves through the processes of selection and additions...The Africa whose culture we are trying to define is the Africa of today and not of the past; Africa that has been punctured on all sides - world-view, kinship, marriage and affinity, social sanctions and so on- by the forces of social change. However, puncturing does not imply total extinction of the former traditional social institutions, beliefs and values of Africa. Rather it implies an enlargement of these realities through the processes of selection and addition."[17] Ekwunife de-mystifies the idea of an homogenous African Theology by arguing that that African culture is not one, closed cultural system but a great variety of open and dynamic cultures which are subsequently reflected in the heterogeneous nature of African Theology. It would therefore be more accurate to describe African *theologies* which share common interest in African historical experience and identity as well as the role of Scripture and Church tradition than in a single, systematic African Theology.

Although we acknowledge that African culture, like any other, is not a closed system to outside influences, we can affirm some generally agreed distinct realities that recur within African culture, a general attitude to life and interpretations of reality, surfacing in African value systems, social, religious and political organisation which Ekwunife states as being:

i) Africans are part of one great cultural heritage of humankind. The African world-view is of no less worth or of theological interest than that of the West.

ii) The factor of social change. African culture is not static but dynamic which means that there has to be a constant reassessment of the norms, values and ideals in which Africans live (and in which Christian theology is done).

iii) The heterogeneous nature of traditional African societies

iv) The continuity of traditional African and political institutions

v) The dynamic nature of any culture and its power of selection and addition[18]

This understanding of African culture will be assumed as underlying much of African theology.

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16 Ekwunife, 1978, op cit

17 Ekwunife, op cit,8-9,11

18 Ekwunife, op cit

4. African Theology : speaking within a tumult of voices

It is forty years since two publications came out that were to be called the start of "a conscious self- theologising by Africans within the structures of missionary Christianity."[19] The more well-known of the two was produced by a group of African Catholic priests entitled *Des petres noirs s'interrogent et suggerent* ; ('Some black priests wonder..'); the other was by Paul De Feuter entitled *'Theological education in Africa'* published in the International Review of Mission.

The rationale behind the former publication is explained in its foreword:

"The African priest, for the advancement of the Reign of God, must say what he thinks of his church in his country. Not that the black priest has simply never been heard . But in the tumult of voices discoursing upon the missions, his word has been rather discreet, and easily missed, whereas it would seem that he actually ought to have the first vote in chapter."[20]

The self-awareness of these African priests and their realisation that their 'voice', their contribution to the life of the Church in Africa (in this particular case, the Roman Catholic Church) was not just important but *vital* to the future of the Church, is an indication both of the 'high volume' of the Western voice within Christian theology and the rising theological self-awareness within the Christian Church in Africa at this time. African Theology could be described as a response to such a plea for it has become the process of making the African voice heard in the world of theology and praxis of the world-wide Christian Church.

This African voice in its different forms has challenged the worldwide Church and in particular its Eurocentricism by taking seriously its own diverse, pre-Christian, religious and cultural heritage as well as examine the impact of political and economical colonialism and the influence of the Christian missionaries on African Christianity in the present-day .

A *'tumult of voices'* to which the priests referred is still present in sub-Saharan Africa, albeit they are different voices to the 1950's when the continent was just beginning to achieve political independence from former colonial governments.

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19 Tite Tienou "Indigenous African Christian Theologies: The Uphill Road", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* April 1990, 73-77

20 cited by A. Ngindu Mushete "An overview of African Theology" in *Paths of African Theology,* 1994, 16

The sociological 'tumult' of voices in Africa today include the influences of modernisation, urbanisation[21], globalisation[22] and the continuing chaos caused by internal political conflict and outright war.

The context of modern African Theology is within the apparent intimacy and inter-dependence of the modern world through such technological advances in communication as the Internet, coined by the current fashionable socio-economic term 'global village'. However it is misleading to think from this term that the world is a more egalitarian, interdependent place since the economic and social discrepancies between the developed Northern hemisphere and the still developing South appear to be widening not narrowing. Sub-Saharan Africa is all too clearly part of an economic trap in which the 'big players', the multinational companies and the international financial community (particularly the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) hold sway and to which the countries are bound, despite their efforts, again with assistance to establish economic independence.Even if the spirit of nineteenth century colonialism is dead there remains an economic and political dependency in Africa which spills over into the mission and ministry of the Christian Church .

It is within this atmosphere of political, economical and social tumult that the Church speaks and identifies the biblical and historical faith to the realities of African experience today within its African Theology. The theological 'tumult' that the Christian Church in Africa faces today include the issues of historical experience and religious experience both of which raise further questions of the nature of African identity and Christian identity.

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21 'Urbanisation': "The process whereby people acquire material elements of culture, behaviour patterns that originate minor are distinctive of the city...and is an instrument of modernisation, with its concomitants of *materialism* and *secularism*....By the end of 2025 AD more than half of Africa's population will be town dwelling...to which the Church's mission, which traditionally has been 'anti-urban', has to respond" Aylward Shorter *The Church in the African city*, 1991, 7, 59 [italics mine)

22 'Globalisation': "A process by which economies of the different countries are integrated to the world capital economy [with] increasing centralisation of the world's production trade in the hands of a few hundreds of multinational companies" K.C.Abraham "Globalization: A Gospel and Culture Perspective" in *International Review of Mission*, vol 85: 336, Jan 1996

5. The search for an African Theology

A Theologia Africana

One of the most significant of early African theologians, Harry Sawyerr would differ with Ekwunife's emphaisis on the plurality of African theologies which reflect the home of hybrid cultures. Sawyerr searches for a *Theologia Africana* within the framework of mainstream Western philosophy and systematic theology to 'translate Christian ideas into forms intelligible to the African'[23]. He acknowledges the difficulties that the traditional assumptions of Western theology bring to African Christianity but argues that African thought-form should be part of a bridge-building for the communication of the Christian Gospel.

"The universal theology of the Christian faith will and must always remain one; but interpreted in the African soil, a *Theologica Africana* might correct the present imbalance caused by the stress on historical theology among many western theologians... it must be part of the main stream of the tradition of the Church whilst attempting to bring fresh insights into man's understanding of the work of God."[24]

African Theology has a wide remit and there has been a tendency as Kwesi Dickson observes to concentrate on African Traditional Religion and ethics, interaction of religions and the independent churches at the expense of biblical and doctrinal areas.[25] Although more recently there has been growth in these areas of study[26] it is inevitable that there will be a concentration on traditional religion since there is a perceived need to establish the validity of African history and identity as the foundation for theology[27]

Religious heritage is about world-views affecting *people* and in the struggle to find an African Christian identity, Bediako emphasises the personal aspect of doing African Theology by

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23 Harry Sawyerr "What is African Theology?" 1971 in *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, 1987, 23.
Also Kwesi Dickson, "Research in the History of Religions in West Africa", *Religion*, August 1975 & Adrian Hastings, *African Christianity-An Essay in Interpretation*, 1976

24 Sawyerr, 1971,24

25 Kwesi Dickson, 1975, 23

26 Christology within African Theology e.g. Robert J Schreiter (Ed.) *Faces of Jesus in Africa*, 1991; Justin S. Ukpong and Charles Nyamiti in *Paths of African Theology*, 1994 chs. 3 &4, ; Kofi Appia-Kubi 'Christology' in *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, 1987, ch. 6

27 cf Appendix 1 .Barney's model of culture

arguing that the theologian must allow him or herself to become the *locus* of this struggle for integration through dialogue, which if it is to be authentic, an inner dialogue and therefore personal and intense.

This, he suggests, characterised early African theology namely John Mbiti and Belaji Idowu which "certainly in its formative stages, the theologian would not stand over against his subject; rather, the development of theological concern and the formulation of theological questions became linked as the unavoidable by-product of the process of Christian self-definition."[28]

If we accept Bediako's idea of the personal nature of (at least early) African theological concern and dialogue, then a theology is created which cuts across socio-cultural factors since it challenges human identity *at its core* : are we made in the image of God or in the image of humanity? For African Christians the question is whether Africans are made in the image of God or in the image of white, Western European through which they heard about the God of Christianity and African Theology has as its primary concern the cultural and theological identity of the African.

6. The Voice of History

i) On Becoming Black Europeans[29]

In 1840 the Secretary of the Anglican Church Missionary Society, Rev. William Ellis was reported to have made the observation that "true civilisation and Christianity are inseparable"[30] and it has been written that the search for an 'authentic' indigenous African theology has had two historical starting points: European colonisation and the Western missionary efforts of the past century. Both were forms of foreign control or domination which characterised politics, economics and Christianity in the continent up to 1950 and, even after political independence,

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28 Kwame Bediako, "The Roots of African Theology", *International Bulletin for Missionary Research*, April 1989, 60

29 cf. A.F. Walls, "Black Europeans; White Africans: Some Missionary Motives in West Africa", 339-348, cited by Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity*, 1992, 233/4

30 Rev. William Ellis cited by T.F. Buxton, "The African Slave Trade and its Remedy", Frank Cass, London, 1840, 507 in Kwame Bediako 1992, 228. It is important to note that Henry Venn, a later Secretary to C.M.S. made proposals for indigenous, self-governing, self-supporting and self-propogating churches which were not taken up at the time.

to the present day.[31]

Missiologist Lamin Sanneh argues that the widely-held view that missions were essentially the religious version of Western political and economic imperialism"...is reinforced by a complex chemistry of galvanised guilt and residual paternalism and ..because massive expansion in favour of missionary fields has boosted the fortunes of a begrudged religion."[32]

However Sanneh is more sympathetic to the early missions, that missionary and political motives were not the same as Europeans penetrated the borders of Africa. In fact, he argues that missions enabled Africans "to employ scriptural and other documentary sources to support claims for indigenous autonomy...with schemes of self-reliance and a corresponding delegitimization of foreign control, missionary or colonial."[33]

However, Alix holds the typical viewpoint argues that "the same vessels transported men of commerce, colony and cloth", that each could not be separated out in terms of their effect on the cultures of traditional Africa

Whether or not there is a sympathetic understanding for the motivation and positive influence of early European missionaries to sub Saharan Africa this has been the starting point for African Theology and has often determined its radical nature.

7. The voice of African Traditional Religions

The Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910 in its consideration of missionary problems in relation to the non-Christian world concluded that the traditional religions of Africa, roundly described as animism[34], contained "no preparation for Christianity" on the basis that it lacked any identifiable features of formulated religious observances and

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31 Tite Tienou, "Indigenous African Christian Theologies: The Uphill Road", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, April, 1990, 73

32 Lamin Sanneh, "The Yogi and the Commissar: Christian Mission and the African Response", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Jan 1991, 2

33 Sanneh,1991, op cit, 3

34 cf Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity* , 1992 , 230-232, 256,257

doctrines.[35] The use of the term 'animism' succeeded 'fetishism' which was used derogatively to describe the religion of the African peoples by Charles de Brosses in 1760 after the Portuguese 'fetisso' meaning something magic,supernatural, sacred or oracular: "These sacred fetishes are nothing more than the first material object which any nation or any individual cares to choose and have ceremonially consecrated by his priests."[36]

'Animism' was a term used by the nineteenth century evolutionary anthropologist E.B. Tyler to describe a form of religion with a theory of two dogmas:"first concerning souls of individual creatures, capable of continued existence after death or destruction of the body; second , concerning other spirits, upward to the rank of powerful deities". It was used equally derogatorily because it lacked the scholarship and literature for the European mind to begin to comprehend it aswell as having no ethical system. It was therefore largely dismissed as having any religious content.[37]

In 1935 Dietrich Westermann[38] went further by viewing the pre-Christian religious tradition as being in *direct opposition* to the teaching of the missionary and that it had to give way to this new teaching.

In a paper to the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in 1934[39], T. Cullen Young asserted that African ceremonial within traditional religion could not be incorporated in the Christian system:

"As it stands, [the title] suggests that it is possible for us, knowing what we now know on the subject of African beliefs, to select and reject among them in order to produce a body of practice and ceremony that will be at once Christian and at the same time firmly rooted in African assent. I do not think this is possible....[especially] concerning our own capacity to meet the African in any shared system at all...his age-tested experience and his success in the field of clansmanship, of comradeship in association."[40]

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35 op cit, 257, citing *World Missionary Conference 1910: Report of Commission IV- The missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions*, Edinburgh and London, Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier 1910

36 Kwame Bediako *Theology and Identity*, 1992, 230-232

37 E. B. Tyler cited by Bediako 1992, 256-7

38 Dietrich Westermann, *Africa and Christianity* 1937

39 T. Cullen Young, *Africa,* vol 8:2, April 1935,210-217

40 op cit 215

It is the fundamental issue of "comradeship in association" which is reflected in rite and ceremony that he has observed in the Bantu tribe particularly which seems to be at odds with Christian practise.

"Radically and inescapably...Christian belief differs from Bantu belief at the very heart. It founds upon God in a personal relationship and all else is incidental or consequent. Bantu belief, on the other hand, founds upon indestructible human relationship, and at no central or vital point is any idea to which we could truthfully apply the title 'God' anything more than incidental."[41]

However Young in departure from other contemporaries like Westermann does allow for the possibility of African belief and consequent ceremony to be enlarged and expanded from *within*, provided that the Christian system acknowledges the implications of and exhibits at least the beginnings of companionate living, the ground work of the 'Great Village'.

"I wish to suggest that the African, given a Christian system visible before him in which his fundamental demand for comradeship and association is satisfied, will himself see to it that his rite and ceremony will retain only that which is congruous to the pattern of extended community and will himself secure its incorporability as worthily Christian."[42]

Since Young wrote this paper in 1934 his challenge to the Christian churches to embody an African 'comradeship' model remains the same. The development of African Theology from 'within' the parameters of traditional African belief *has* expanded to incorporate the Christian systems including the Eucharist.

The theological supremacy of the Western Christianity however continued until the emergence of African Theology which at least acknowledges the influence of pre-Christian religions on African Christiaity and at most embraces them fully within worship and mission.

i) Establishing an African religious heritage

The other prominent 'voice' within African Theology, which is associated with the identity issue is Africa's religious heritage in the form of African Traditional Religions' i.e.the pre-Christian religions of and within each different ethnic group or tribe to which Westermann was

41 op cit 211/12

42 op cit 217,213

referring.

Features of these religions include:

i) A strong continuity with the past, including the creative activity of a High God, the land and ancestral traditions.

ii) 'Clan' solidarity creating a strong sense of mutual dependence and co-operation.

iii) Holistic concept of life: the spiritual and temporal are not separated.

iv) Strong oral tradition including myths, proverbs and fables.

Of traditional religions, church historian Adrian Hastings comments on the plurality and infusion of different African cultures, that "despite the contrasts however, there are also profound similarities... since African religions do not exist in a vacuum.They have influenced each other through human contact due to migration, military conquest and marriage... Within one people there could be significant differences in religion caused by the sectional activity of secret societies or local shrines ...religion frequently crossed tribal frontiers, not only by borrowings, but also by the enduring sense of a wider community. Major territorial cults...provided pilgrimage centres for people of different tribes, while systems of divining, secret societies, cults of affliction and witchcraft eradication often passed from people to people. So did the name of God. "[43]

It is the heritage of African religion which is the starting point of much African theology, and particularly in the work of the early theologians such as John Mbiti[44] and E. Bolaji Idowu[45] . Both Mbiti and Idowu argued that there was a continuum between the concepts of God in pre-Christian traditional religions and Judeo-Christianity; that the religions were not, as early Christian missionaries supposed, "animism..which cannot stand up to the insights of Western learning"[46] but the basis of spirituality on which Christianity has been built.

Although there may be common features within the diverse religious heritage which have contributed to African culture today, they have not created *one* African religious culture and the development of Christianity with its hundreds, if not thousands, of different denominations is

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43 Adrian Hastings "African Religions", *The Penguin Dictionary of Religions"* Ed. John R. Hinnells,1984, 22-24

44 John Mbiti e.g. *African Religions and Philosophy* ,1969; *Concepts of God in Africa* ,1970

45 E. Bolaji Idowu e.g. *Olodumare- God in Yoruba Belief*, 1962; *African Traditional Religion*, 1973

46 J. Herbert Kane *Understanding the Christian Missions*, 1986, 219-221 cited by Tienou,1990 op cit 258

clear evidence of this.

ii) John Mbiti: affirming an African religious heritage

John Mbiti was one of the first African theologians to highlight the theological importance of African Traditional Religions in his now famous book *African religions and philosophy* . In his task of defining them, he argues that they are such an integral part of African life that the many different religious beliefs and activities are difficult to define. However to establish a common 'philosophy' within African traditional religions, he argues that there are more similarities than differences between them:

"Fundamental concepts like the belief in God, existence of spirits, continuation of human life after death, magic and witchcraft, seem to have been retained when one people may have split or branched off in course of the centuries."[47]

Mbiti sees traditional religion as having the role of 'transfused religion' which is a social uniformity, not institutionalised but as equally tolerant as it is indifferent. Mbiti looks to traditional religion as that on which Africa must count "to make an impress on the moral, ethics, standards and social conditioning of its peoples through the institutional religions... If this formless type of 'transfused religion' makes a contribution to [the] basic elements in man's search for identity and security whether institutionalised religions survive or not, they will have bequeathed to Africa something of lasting value and inspiration."[48]

For Mbiti the cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of humanity is found in his dictum "I am, because we are; and since we are therefore I am".[49]

African human identity is found with being in community with others and not individualistic as in the West. This is a **crucial** element of African identity and its ramifications for African theology.

John Mbiti's studies of the African Traditional Religions highlight the concrete features of the

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47 John S. Mbiti, *African religions and philosophy*, 1969, 103

48 John Mbiti, 1969, op cit,276

49 Mbbiti op cit, 108-9

religions which lay the foundation of the Afican religious heritage.

In both *Concepts of God in Africa* and *African Religion and Philosophy*, Mbiti does not set out to produce a systematic theology from the huge diversity of material about African religions but establishes the facts from which later theologians could work. Some have consequently regarded his work as too preoccupied with the religions at the expense of creating theology but this criticism is unfair. Mbiti and others map out the African religious history and experience which had for too long been ignored and this takes time if the foundations for an African Theology are to be secure.

iii) Some aspects of African Traditional Religion

In *Concepts of God in Africa* Mbiti sets out to disprove a Western perception of pre-Christian religion in Africa that is primitive and 'uncivilised' (cf. Edinburgh 1910 and Westermann 1937), polytheistic and unethical in studying 270 different tribal groups and their concepts of God, with the underlying premise that "African peoples are not religiously illiterate."[50]

He argues, through the evidence of these religious traditions, that concepts of God underlie *all* that makes up for the traditional African life, socially, economically and morally.

The African understanding of God as omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, transcendent and immanent proves for Mbiti that African religions are *preparation evangelii* , that is, the theological ground which has been prepared by God for the Christian Gospel. The names given to describe God therefore reflect the theological understanding within the so-called Africa Traditional Religions.

God as Creator

The understanding of God as Creator is fundamental to the African traditional religions' worldview. Mbiti writes that "practically all African peoples consider God as creator, making this the commonest attribute of the works or activities of God"[51] .

The Creator titles for God include: Carver, Inventor, Architect (Akan, Ghana); Cleaver (Akamba, Kenya);Creator, Moulder, Constructor (Ila, Zambia); Carpenter (Tiv, Nigeria);

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50 John Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa*, 1970, xiii

51 Mbiti 1970 op cit, 45ff

Fashioner (Kiga, Uganda);The Original Source (Ngoni, Malawi). For many of the African religions studied by Mbiti, God's creativity is reflected in his providence for and sustenance of the land and the people.

God as Provider

God's providence is seen as reflected in rainfall which "to African peoples... is always a blessing and its supply is one of the most important activities of God."[52]
God's providence is sought for fertility of land and humanity, for health and for plenty; for the Edo (Nigeria) group for example God is referred to as the "Bringer of Children"[53] and prayers for rain are commonplace.

God as Sustainer

God's sustenance is sought as keeper and guardian of all that is precious and that will sustain and preserve families and future security. The Nandi (Kenya) for example refer to God as "the Guardian Spirit" who will guard their children, pregnant women and cattle.

God as Protector, Healer, Cherisher

The concept of God as protector, cherisher and healer is a common one, exemplified by the Banyarwanda (Rwanda) who have a proverb which indicates "that God's protection is exercised over the whole of his creation, because he stretches his "very long arms" over all things so that nothing can hurt them."[54]

Salvation and authority

The understanding of God as an authoritative figure tends to be as King, Chief or ruler e.g. The Luo 'Ruodhi' (King of Kings) and salvation from God is not seen in moral terms but in

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52 Mbiti 1970 op cit, 58
53 op cit ,59
54 op cit, 65

saving people from physical danger, afflictions, distress and trouble, all of which are frequently encountered in African societies.[55]

Sacrifices and offerings

Mbiti makes the distinction between sacrifices and offerings; the former meaning where animal life is destroyed in order to present the animal or part of it to God, supernatural beings, spirits or the departed. The latter he defines as all other cases in which animals are not killed, and in which items like foodstuffs, utensils etc. are used for presenting to God or other recipients.[56] The function and meaning of both have various theories attached (gift, propitiation, communion, thank offering) to which Mbiti adds that they are 'acts of restoring the ontological balance' between God and humanity, the spirits and humanity, and the departed and the living.[57] As a rule no sacrifices are made without prayers which are the commonest acts of worship mostly addressed to God and some to the living-dead.[58] These prayers include invocations and appeals, blessings, greetings and thanksgiving. Particular prayers are said at times of planting crops, harvest, drought, war, distress, calamity, illness or disaster and before or during a particular undertaking.
Mbiti cites an Anuak (Sudan) prayer for a sick child:

O God, thou art great,
Thou art the One who created me,
I have no other.
God, thou art in the heavens,
Thou art the only One:
Now my child is sick,
And thou wilt grant me my desire.[59]

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55 op cit ,69
56 op cit 178
57 op cit 179
58 op cit 194
59 C.G.& B.Z.Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, London 1932, 111 cited by Mbiti 1970, 195

And a Chagga (Tanzania) prayer of sacrifice, whilst facing Mt. Kilimanjaro:

We know thee, God, Chief, Preserver...
He who burst forth men that they lived.
We praise thee, and pray to thee, and fall before thee...
Chief, receive this bull of thy name.
Heal him to whom thou gavest it and his children.
Sow the seed of offspring with us,
That we may beget like bees...
Now, Chief, Preserver, bless all that is ours.[60]

The place of worship is often a tree[61] a rock or shrine and the focus of worship is often towards a river, sea or mountain that is regarded as holy, the place where God (or spirits) lives.Interestingly, among the Kenyan Gikuyu today, one can find Christian churches built near traditional sacred fig or sycamore trees.
The traditional Gikuyu would pray this prayer for blessing of a homestead facing Kere-Nyaga 'the mountain of mystery':

You, the Great Elder,
Who dwells on the Kere-Nyaga,
Your blessing allows homesteads to spread.
Your anger destroys homesteads. We beseech You,
And in this we are in harmony with the spirits of our ancestors:
We ask You to guard this homestead and let it spread.
Let the women, herd and flock be prolific.
(Chorus)
Peace, praise or beseech ye, Ngai (God),
Peace be with us.[57]

The prayers would often be said by intermediaries in worship on the basis that God cannot be approached alone or directly so priests, seers, prophets and oracles, diviners, medicine-men

60 C.Dundas, Kilimanjaro and its People, London,1924, 146, cited by Mbiti 1970 op cit 198
57 Jomo Kenyatta *Facing Mount Kenya* 1978, 81-2

and witches, rainmakers, kings and chiefs, the living-dead, animals and inanimate were the intermediaries for communication between the people and their God.[62]

However, Mbiti points out in *Concepts of God in Africa* that over the past fifty years, Africa has changed rapidly and many individuals are according to Mbiti becoming "detached from the corpus of their tribal and traditional beliefs, concepts and practices. On the other hand , these concepts have not all been abandoned nor are they likely to be wiped out immediately by these modern changes. Traditional religions neither send missionaries nor make proselytes: their strength lies in being fully integrated in all the departments of human existence. As such, they cannot and need not be completely wiped out, so long as those who follow them are alive." [63]

8. African Initiated Churches (AICs)

From the beginning of the twentieth century there has has been a growing development of African- based churches, collectively known as 'African Initiated Churches, which came out of an African reaction to colonisation, subjugation to European power and Western Christianity.For example the Providence Industrial Mission founded by Chilembe of Nyasaland (Malawi) in 1914 became a symbol of political and religious liberation. In Kenya the Gikuyu Independent Church arose out of the need to preserve African traditions such as female circumcision and polygamy in wake of missionary attacks on such indigenous customs. In the 1930's they were called 'Spiritist Churches' because of the centrality of prayer and the emphasis on the Holy Spirit and today African Initiated Churches reflect a varied integration of African traditional religion and missionary Christianity dependent in their style of worship on the place and culture of origin. With the emphasis on personal prayer and holiness, corporate prayer, spiritual and physical wholeness, the AICs konow that Afrcians cannot dichotomise life and the churches hold a holistic understanding of life which is essential in African self-expression.[64]

We shall look at the impact of the African Initiated Churches in chapter 5.

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58 op cit 220-234. See also Mbiti *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1969, 166-203

59 John Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa*, 1970, xiv

64 Zablon Nthamburi ,Towards Indigenisation of Christianity in Africa: A missiological task, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research July 1989*, 112-7

9. Black Theology and African Theology: A Dialogue

African Theologians can be quick to assert that African Theology is *distinct* from Black Theology because although both theological approaches are concerned with the experience of black people they differ in their focus. Whereas Black Theology has its origins in the racial and political liberation movements of the 1960's and 70's in America and South Africa, African Theology has its origins in the African history and experience, tending not to focus upon political liberation (although the independence movement of the 1950's and 60's did bring into question a post-colonial, post-independence African identity) but on historical experience.

The South African theologian Simon S. Maimela defines Black Theology as "a conscious and systematic theological reflection on black experience which is characterised by oppression and suffering in white racist societies in North America and South Africa" which attempts to be "a critical reflection on the historical praxis in which the powerful white Christians dominate and oppress the powerless black Christians"and representing "an articulated form of black resistance to white power structure, hoping thereby to inspire and arm the oppressed blacks in their struggle for the liberating transformation of unjust racist social societies in which they live."[65]

This can be compared to a description of African Theology suggested by Patrick Kalilombe as pursuing two tasks: a negative and a positive one.
"Negatively, African theology exposes and refutes several ways of thinking, both cultural and religious , which have underpinned the tendency to despise and do away with traditional cultures and religions. Of these the crudest is the one that claims Africans are sub-human, inferior, or underdeveloped simply because they have not followed the same path of progress as the 'civilised' peoples of the industrialised West. This powerful and deep-rooted myth made slavery and colonialism acceptable, and even conferred on them an aura of benefaction. To this end African theology examines Scripture and takes up the theme of humanity's oneness in spite of its diversity; the theme also of the 'image of God' present in every human being, and the fundamental equality and right to respect that this demands...It also examines the theme of

65 Simon S. Maimela "Black Theology of Liberation" in *Paths of African Theology*, 1994, 182-195

God's presence and salvific activity among peoples who are not visibly confronted with the historical manifestation of Jesus Christ...[and it] raises the question of what unity of Christian faith means as opposed to uniformity, and how the universality of the one Christian faith is to manifest itself in concrete terms."[66]

Although both approaches to theology challenge European and/or white dominance within the local and wider Church which has resulted in oppresion of identity, power and the fullness of the Gospel, where there has been dialogue between Black Theology and African Theology there have been differences between theologians on the need for and the nature of liberation. The South African theologian Manas Buthelezi for example accuses African Theology of being too concerned with ethnography, that the links with the situation of today are lost in the search for points of connection with the past. On the other hand, John Mbiti regards Black Theology as too focussed on themes like blackness, liberation and politics.[67]

For African Theologian Gabriel Setiloane, Black Theology is too dependent on Western theological patterns and concepts...[whereas] the continuity between today's faith in God and the forefathers' traditional belief is the heart of theology.[68]

Patrick Kalilombe, in contrast, finds the element of liberation theology in African theological reflection which "must help people see the need to rid themselves of the inhibiting attitude of passivity and fatalism. They are enabled to trust in their own ability to bring necessary change. Only then can they begin to struggle for self-reliance."[69]

Kalilombe equates theological liberation with a political self-reliance which as we shall see has informed local theologies in Africa such as a currently holistic approach to mission and ministry developed in the Anglican Diocese of Kirinyaga, Kenya.[70]

It must be said that both theologies, and there is diversity within each, have their starting point

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66 Patrick Kalilombe "African Theology" in *The Modern Theologians, Volume II*, edited by David F.Ford, 1989, 201-207

67 M.Buthelezi "Essays on Black Theology",1973, 29-35 and John Mbiti "An African Views American Black Theology" in Eds. Wilmore & Cone, " Black Theology : A Documentary History, 1966-1979 " 1979, 478-479, 481; cited in , *Variations in Christian Theology in Africa* , Eds. John S. Pobee & Carl F.Hallencreutz, 1986, 104

68 Gabriel Setiloane, *Pan African Conference of Third World Theologians*, Accra,1977 , cited by Pobee & Hallencreutz, 1986, 105,106

69 Patrick Kalilombe "Doing Theology at the Grassroots: A Challenge for Professional Theologians" A.F.E.R. vol 27:4, Aug 1985, 234 cited by Zablon Nthamburi *The African Church at the Crossroads* 1991, 42

70 See chapter 6

in Western theology even if they end up by rejecting it as a religious continuation of the negative, de-humanising effect of early colonialism and exploitation.
If we compare the definitions of Maimela and Kalilombe they seem to be heading in the same direction, with the former using stronger political language but both are arguing for a theologically self-respecting identity that comes from an identity in Christ, for a separation from the western world-view, for a relationship with the white, formerly oppressive West that is one of equals in every sense and expressed in the response of theological innovation and social and political liberation.

So the task of the African theologian today is not an easy one with so many 'voices' speaking to African life. One approach has been applying the principle of 'inculturation' to the dialogue between theology and culture in Africa, in particular the dialogue between Christian theology received from a Western world- view[71] and African culture, exemplified in the traditional religions' world-view.

10. The Incarnation and African Theology

The general discussion on the distinctiveness of African theology until now has been focussed upon the nature of God rather than in the person of Christ. This does reflect an absence of Christology in early African theology which had to first peel away the cultural layers brought by the first European missionaries, expressed by one theologian as creating 'a new African in the missionary's own cultural, theological and philosophical image.'[72] Now that task has begun to be completed, the task of developing uniquely African Christology has started.

In the collection of Christological essays, *Faces of Jesus in Africa* (Schreiter et al) Franciois Kabasele Lumbala argues that in Christ there is a synthesis of traditional religion and Christianity. He writes that "as new cultures encounter Christ, various "vacant seats" in Christianity will be taken. Thus, certain Bantu values, such as that of ancestor worship, will

71 'World -view': "World-views are like the foundations of a house; vital but invisible. they are that **through** which, not **at** which a society or individual normally looks; they form the grid through which humans organise reality". Tom Wright (source unknown), cited by Graham Cray,*Gospel and Culture in a Time of Transition*, Presentation Paper , Nottingham, May 1996

72 D.W.Waruta op cit, 113

become Christian, by the fact that they will be experienced by Bantu Christians, in a synthesis that breaks neither with the Bantu nor with Christ, a synthesis over which the criterion of an unconditional, absolute love for God and our siblings ought to preside."

Kabasele sees no contradiction between worshipping Christ and worshipping ancestors on the basis that belief in Christ transforms all that we do.
"Just as Christ the one priest, does not abolish human mediations but fulfils them in himself so does he consummate in himself the mediation exercised by our ancestors, a mediation that he does not abolish but which, in him, is revealed to be henceforward a subordinate mediation."

The issue of culturally-bound language becomes clear when we look at Christology. Kalilombe uses the example of "Christ as King" (cf. 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14) which as an African he would equate with a European ruler since he knows only chiefs, not kings, from his village experience.[73]
Alphonse Ngindu Mushete, a Roman Catholic theologian from the Luba people, reiterates the principle of the incarnation of the Word taking up the whole of human kind and the cosmos: Christ is seen and presented in the liturgy with the characteristics of Chief of chiefs, Ntita, Luaba (chosen to rule), Çimankanda or Cilobo (Hero: he who is in the vanguard and who leads the battle lines but never runs from the enemy). This is expressed in a prayer from the diocese of Mbujimayi:

Lord God...help us to hear your word, the example of the Anointed, Luaba and our Chief, who conquers Satan and all evil, he who has life and power...
Cimankinda full of life and honour, you sacrificed yourself to wipe out our sins. Enable us to do good, and then we shall be with you when you come..Jesus the Anointed, Cilobo, who never runs from the enemy, accept the offering of our faith, and take it to the Father, you who have life and power...[74]

For Christ to take up the whole of human kind and the cosmos in his Incarnation, to embody

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[73] Kalilombe, cited by Nthamburi, 1991, op cit,42

[74]Tthe missal of the Mbujimayi diocese published as*Didia Mfumu* or "Meal of the Lord", Kinshasa, 1980, Year C p 87, cited by Alphonse Ngundu Mushete "The Figure of Jesus in African Theology" *Concilium 196*, 1988, 76

the victory of life over death means for Mushete that Christ is the Ancestor of ancestors; he is the Way, the gate of entry to the Father cf John 10:9 and for Mushete in Christ "the mediatory words and actions of our ancestors culminate and are fulfilled."[75]

An African Identity: Does it exist?

If context and its cognates are to be stressed, there is the presupposition of a clear definition of one's identity and values. African theologian John Pobee has reflected that "as one looks at Africa today, there is a crisis of motivation which makes it difficult for Africans to have a clear vision on the subject of African ness, African identity or identities".[76]

Some theologians like Kwame Bediako would argue that African Theology clarifies the nature of the African *Christian* identity with its self-conscious rehabilitation of Africa's religious and cultural heritage and this heritage includes the traditional religions in Africa.

"Yet this is not so much a chronological past as an 'ontological' past, which, together with the profession of the Christian faith, gives account of one and the same entity-namely, the history of the religious consciousness of the African Christian. In this sense the African theologian's concern with the pre-Christian religious heritage becomes an endeavour to clarify the nature and meaning of African Christian identity."[77]

The quest for African Theology is a quest for a theology of self-hood.

11. Inculturation: A Response to the Theology-Culture Dialogue

'Inculturation' is a fairly recent model of contextualising theology which has been present since the beginning of Christian history[78]. Missiologist David Bosch points out that "the Christian faith never exists except as "translated' into a culture"[79] and the early church is no exception. The early church was itself a model of contextualisation in that it straddled the Jewish-Gentile

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75 Mushete,1988 op cit, 76

76 John Pobee, "Contextuality and Universality in Theological Education", in *Variations in Christian Theology in Africa* [Eds. Pobee & Hallencreutz]1986,6

77 Kwame Bediako, "The Roots of African Theology", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, April 1989, 58f

78 cf Bosch, *Transforming Mission* , 1991, 430-2; 430-432.

79 Bosch, 1991,op cit, p447

worlds, being "born in a cross-cultural milieu with translation [of language] as its birthmark."[80] The post-apostolic church continued to reflect this cultural diversity, creating inculturated liturgies in Syrian, Coptic and Ethiopian churches.

After Constantine, Christianity went from being a minority and persecuted religion to being the official Roman religion, making the Church "*the* bearer of culture"[81] and, by the time the large-scale Western colonial expansion began, "Western Christians were unconscious of the fact that their theology was culturally conditioned ; they simply assumed that it was supracultural and universally valid. And since Western culture was explicitly regarded as Christian , it was equally self-evident that this culture had to be exported together with the Christian faith".

'Inculturation' is an social anthropological term that began to be used theologically in the early 1970's by the Roman Catholic Church.
In 1975 Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntandi* defined evangelisation:
"what matters is to evangelise human culture and cultures (not in a purely decorative way as it were by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots)...The transposition has to be done with discernment, seriousness, respect and competence."[82]

This understanding of communicating the Gospel, evangelisation, was a continuation of the principles established in the Vatican II documents.
"The Church has been sent to all ages and nations and therefore is not tied exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, to any one particular way of life, or to any customary practices, ancient or modern. The Church is faithful to its traditions and is at the same time conscious of its universal mission; it can, then, enter into communion within different forms of

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80 The translatability and possible contextualisation of Christianity can be compared that of Islam in the fact that in the writings of early Christianity the language of its founder were not used but rapidly translated into Greek and Latin.This contrasts sharply with the Islam whose only language is Arabic, since the language of the Qu'ran containing the very thoughts of Allah were dictated directly to the Prophet Mohammed in Arabic, thus limiting Islam's capacity to contextualise.
(Bosch 1991, op cit, 553)

81 Bosch op cit, 448

82 Pope Paul VI "Evangelii Nuntandi", Vatican , Sacred Congregation for Evangelization, 1975, paras 20, 63 cited by Gerald Arbuckle *Earthing the Gospel: An Inculturation Handbook for Pastoral Workers*, 1990, 16

culture, thereby enriching both itself and the cultures themselves."[83]

The concern for both evangelisation and cultures, as well as an affirmation of the dignity of the human person, into which Christ is preached and worshipped, led theologians and missiologists within the Roman Catholic Church to develop a theology which allowed for the principles of Vatican II to become reality. This is illustrated by development of 'inculturated ' liturgies which we shall be examining later.

In 1977 the term 'inculturation' was used in the message of the Fifth World Synod of Roman Catholic Bishops and in an official papal document by John Paul II (the Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis) in October 1979. Since then numerous papers and books developing the concept of inculturation have emerged from Roman Catholicism although it has not been without its critics, particularly in the field of liturgical study.

However it reflects a serious attempt to acknowledge that there is not one universal Christian culture but that the Gospel intersects with the different cultures, both shaping the outworking of the other without denying or relativising the radical nature of the Gospel.

Although the focus of inculturation tends to be within the developing world where the Church is expanding the most quickly and where mission/evangelisation is still focussed , in an age where the Christian Church in the West is a shadow of its 'former glory' numerically and in terms of its lasting impact on the secular, materialistic and individualistic culture in which it lives, the challenge of inculturation is not without importance.

In the attempt to relate theology and culture other terms have also been used by theologians and missiologists, namely enculturation, acculturation, adaptation or contextualization.[84]

Enculturation is a term used by sociologists and social anthropologists and refers to a largely informal process of learning from childhood onwards that enables an individual to become an integrated part of their culture.

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83 Vatican Council II *Gaudium et Spes* 1965, ch 2,. para 58, in *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Ed. Austin Flannery, 1988, 962-3

84 For further definitions of these terms: see Aylward Shorter *Theology of Inculturation*, 1988 3-16; Gerald Arbuckle *op cit*, 17-24; Peter Schineller *A Handbook on Inculturation*,1990, 144-27

Acculturation, similarly used, is the acquiring by one society of the cultural qualities of another society,which creates cultural change and is a collective, historical process rather than an individual one.

Adaptation on the other hand connotes a ready-made way of living [in Africa an Eurocentric way of living] that is inserted to replace 'unnecessary' features of the recipient culture. Shorter writes that "the technician in the adaptation is [in mission] to be the evangeliser; he or she is to choose the 'pieces' to be sorted."[85]

Contextualization is probably nearer the meaning of inculturation than any of the other terms and has ben defined as "the process of making evangelism [the Protestant equivalent to the Catholic 'evangelisation'] and the new lifestyle relevant in the specifics of time and space."[86]

Hesselgrave and Rommen assert the imperative of fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) to evangelise the world and to do this entails an understandable hearing of the Gospel. "If the gospel is to be understood, contextualization must be true to the complete authority and unadulterated message of the Bible on the one hand and it must be related to the cultural linguistic and religious background of the respondents on the other."[87]
Their motive is to find proposals that meet this commission are "scripturally sound and culturally viable."[88]

12. Towards a definition of inculturation

The relationship between culture and theology is a highly complex one and one route that both African and Western theologians have taken is that of 'inculturation'.

'Inculturation' was first used coined by the Jesuit Father Pedro Arrup as: "The incarnation of

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85 Shorter, op cit, 17

86 A.R.Tippett "Contextualization of the Gospel in Fiji: A Case Study from Oceania" in J. Stott & R. Coote (Eds.) *Gospel and Culture* 1978

87 David J. Hesselgrave & Edward Rommen *Contextualization*, 1989, xi

88 Hesselgrave & Rommen, 1989, op cit xii

Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a 'new creation'"[89]

Inculturation is not a theological exercise but a missiological response to the Gospel of Christ. Shorter affirms an incarnational Christological understanding of inculturation:
"Jesus Christ is the subject matter of inculturation...It is he who enters into dialogue with human culture. Inculturation is a further and definitive step by which Jesus Christ enters into a living relationship with a cultural tradition...He cannot impose a cultural uniformity, for this is to invite superficiality and syncretism which is the failure to communicate meaning. Evangelization is not a mere lip-service or verbal code learned by rote. It invites a real response of faith and conviction to the Truth in Christ and this demands inculturation."[90]

Fr. Aylward Shorter, one of Roman Catholicism's greatest advocates of inculturation as a means of doing theology, makes several points about inculturation from his definition above:

i) Inculturation is as applicable to the (ancient) Christianized West as to the relatively newly converted' Third World". As long as faith is present to a culture, the dialogue [between faith and culture] must take place."
ii) The Christian faith cannot exist except in a cultural form.
iii) Inculturation is a phenomenon that transcends mere acculturation."It is the stage when a human culture is enlivened by the Gospel from within, a stage which presupposes a measure of reformulation, or, more accurately, reinterpretation."[91]
Shorter incorporates a theology of the Incarnation, together with mission emphasis and a critical eye to cultural uniformity to put across his understanding of inculturation.

Gerald Arbuckle takes a similar approach to Shorter emphasising the synonymous link between

89 Fr Pedro Arrupe SJ "Letter to the Whole Society on Inculturation", Aixala (Ed.) vol 3, 1978 cited by Aylward Shorter , *Towards a Theology of Inculturation*, 1988, 11
90 Shorter, 1988,63
91 Shorter ,op cit 12

inculturation and mission/evangelisation but focusses primarily on the impact of inculturation on the First World. Arbuckle describes inculturation as a process of exchange, a dialogue, which takes place under four conditions:

i) A lucid grasp by evangelisers of what Gospel mission / evangelisation means

ii) Personal /community conversion to the Lord

iii) An understanding of the cultures

iv) Interaction between the believing people and culture(s) resulting in action[92]

Arbuckle puts this into the context of the Roman Catholic approach "Inculturation *is* evangelisation; the word emphasises the ***depth*** of the interaction/ dialogue /exchange that must occur between the Gospel message and cultures."[93]

David Bosch argues that inculturation as a model for mission is different from the previous accommodation or indigenisation models because of three factors: the primary agents of the Holy Spirit and the local community, especially the laity, the emphasis on the local (i.e. diocesan) situation cf. Lumen Gentium 23, 26 and a regional manifestation.
Inculturation is never a *fait accompli* but is a tentative and continuing process within which interculturation takes place. Interculturation is an exchange of theologies, between the Third World and the West, a kind of theological osmosis[94] .

Inculturation is a response to the dialogue between theology and culture. It is a process which affects both the message and messenger. It challenges the Church to find the 'essence' of the Gospel which is 'supracultural' and to replace cultural-specific out workings of Christianity. So it raises the question of syncretism and challenges the worldwide Church to rethink what it means to be united within diversity.

92 Gerald Arbuckle SM, *Earthing the Gospel*, 1990, 18-29
93 Arbuckle, 1990,op cit 20
94 Bosch 1991, op cit, 456

CHAPTER FOUR

INCARNATIONAL WORSHIP: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORSHIP, LITURGY AND CULTURE

"Worship is a sensitive plant and its roots are in the soul" [1]

If one was to ask a hundred people to write about worship, it would be like asking them for a description of a painting or an opinion on the state of the world...there will be a hundred different answers! So it is with any discussion on Christian worship which raises many questions for the ministry and mission of the Christian church today including :
Why is the subject and praxis of Christian worship so contentious?
Are there norms by which church worship can be measured?
What do we do when we worship?
What difference does a worshipping community make to the immediate world in which it lives?
How does the local and national culture influence a particular worshipping community (if at all?)

To speak of a theology of worship, therefore seems an impossible task since we are dealing with both the enigma and the essential of Christianity.
It is an enigma because the very nature of worship has a mysterious and often indescribable component and words cannot communicate wholly the mysteries of the Christian faith.
It is an essential because in worship the faithful demonstrate orally, physically and symbolically their response to the God who first responded to humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. It is a supreme example of the relational nature of God: we worship in the power of the Holy Spirit and as we worship, we move closer to God and to the worshipping body around us. In corporate worship, individuals demonstrate their unity in Christ and offer to God, in the presence of their sisters and brothers, service, devotion and sacrifice.
The Protestant theologian Karl Barth said of Christian worship that it is the "most momentous,

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[1] Donald Gray & Gordon Wakefield *Getting the Liturgy Right: Practical Liturgical Principles for Today*, 1982, 3

the most urgent, the most glorious action that can take place in human life."[2]

Despite the complexity of Christian worship, it has not stopped theologians from trying to put into a systematic framework the modes and characteristics of Christian worship, a few of which we shall be examining and we will see that there are recurring themes despite their differing approaches.

1. Background

How does a Christian know how much worth-ship to offer God?
Simply because God has revealed himself- in nature, in history and in our experience-and this revelation is given articulated meaning and context in Scripture. An obvious but necessary starting point is to be reminded that Christian worship, and its liturgical expression, has its roots in the patterns of Old Testament worship expressed in texts of prayer, supplication, thanksgiving and praise.

Old Testament worship

In the Old Testament we find that worship is a response to the saving action of God in the history of Israel; for example, the keeping of the Sabbath as a response to God the Creator (Exodus 20:8-11) and keeping the Passover as a response to God's deliverance of his people from slavery in Egypt in such a way as to bring into the present the benefits of remembering the power, love and faithfulness of God (Exodus 12).
Old Testament worship reflects the intimate involvement of God with his people Israel in their ordinary lives, demonstrated in the consecration of the ordinary things to express the extraordinary love of God: for example, oil used for anointing [3] and the first fruits of harvest used for thanksgiving offering to God.[4]
In the Old Testament we also find examples of individual worship and prayer, like Nehemiah,

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2 Karl Barth, cited by J.J .von Allmen *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* ,1965 ,13
3 Oil used for anointing: Ex 30:25; Lev 8:10-12
4 First fruits of harvest: Ex 23:116; Ex 34:22

Daniel, Isaiah and in the Book of Psalms[5] and amongst the prophets the denouncement of Israel's' worship that resembles more of a performance before God than a heart-felt response to God's self-revelation e.g. Micah 6; Amos 5:21-25.
These texts were refined through use and reflection and passed down through the generations as key liturgical resources for forming and expressing Israel's unique relationship with God. [6]

The role of the Holy Spirit

Another important factor as background to our discussion on a contemporary theology of worship is the influence of the charismatic movement which has formalised somewhat in the West over the past twenty years, but has been expressed through Pentecostalism, the East African Revival and in African Initiated Churches for much longer.

Throughout the Old Testament, the presence of the Spirit of God, the Hebrew *ruach YHWH* , is understood to be the 'life-force' of God shown in creation (Gen 1:1-3; Psalm 104:29), the 'silent partner' in the salvation history of Israel and the inspiration of Israel's expressions of worship.

In the New Testament, the Spirit has a 'new' role in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ and later specified in the Trinitarian formula cf. Ephesians 2:18.
References to preaching 'in the power of the Holy Spirit'; baptism 'in the one Spirit' and worship by those who are 'filled with the Spirit' confirm the vital role of the Spirit within the Godhead as the bond of communion between the Father and Son and it is in the Spirit that we have communion or fellowship with each other.[7]
The *dynamis* (Greek, lit: 'power') of the Holy Spirit was demonstrated amongst the disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2) and was followed by 'signs and wonders' and the beginning of the

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5 e.g. Nehemiah 1:5f; Daniel 9:4f; Isaiah 6, Psalms 24, 29, 42, 98 etc.
6 cf. Lloyd op cit, 14f; Jeremy Fletcher & Christopher Cocksworth *The Spirit and Liturgy*, April 1998, 7
7 cf 1 Thess 1:5; 1 Cor 12:3; Eph 5:18-19; 2 Cor 13:13, Phil 2:1. cf Fletcher & Cocksworth, 1998 op cit, 5-6

Church's response to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19).[8]

This almost indecently brief reference to the role of the Holy Spirit simply reminds us that the Spirit's dynamis is a key, underlying factor as one grapples with the complex nature of theology of Christian worship.

2. Toward a definition of worship[9]

So can one define worship? In a sense, Christian worship defies definition because it can only be experienced. It may be analysed but it can never be completely contained in formulas and creeds and liturgies...

"Even though the *esse* (the reality) of worship cannot be defined or contained in formulas, the *bene esse* (well-being), or those things which aid worship, can be set forth"[10] and it is precisely this differentiation between the 'essence' and the mode or *pattern* of worship that has caused controversy within the Christian Church down the centuries, in particular over the Eucharist.

In order to begin to understand the reasons for such controversy which has proved to be both constructive and creative, yet also destructive to the commonality of the worldwide Church, we shall examine several different Christian perspectives.

Their understanding of the nature and purpose of worship may help us to discover universal principles, particularly in the light of diverse cultural norms, including those to do with language, symbolism and ritual, which we will see affect the expression of worship.

3. Language and Power

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8 For Introduction to Pneumatology see Philip J Rosato in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* 1983, 262-269
J.V. Taylor *The Go-Between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission*, 1972

9 'Worship:' from the Anglo-Saxon 'weothscipe' - 'worth' and 'ship' meaning to ascribe worth, referring to one worthy of reverence and honour.

10 F.M.Segler *Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice*, 1967, 6-7

In his book *The Concept of Worship*, Ninian Smart uses philosophy of religion and a variety of religious traditions, together with linguistics, to explore the concept of religious, in particular theistic, worship.
His focus on language and worship leads him to assert that a "proper account" of worship can be approached from two directions: from the 'outer' direction of ritual and from the 'inner' direction of intentions and beliefs.
Smart argues that **ritual** "typically has to do with overt, and chiefly bodily, action...The overt actions vary widely from one ritual to another and from one culture to another"[11] and with Hinduism in mind, Smart looks at the physical ritual of bowing down before an image of a god, the image being the phenomenological focus of bowing.

"The usage of physical movements in ritual supplies a range of gestures and these in a sense constitute a *language*." [12]

This language he argues can be misunderstood by an 'extra-perspectival description', a critical judgment. He uses the example of a Christian regarding the image of the heathen god/s as literally wood or stone because of their 'extra perspective 'that says that there is only one God and no phenomenological god whose image is portrayed in wood or stone.
Language in ritual therefore is not just verbal but physical and it expresses the intentions and beliefs of the worshipper. It is the **intention** of the worshipper that makes the outward form of ritual have the *meaning* of worship.
"In worship, one addresses the *focus* of worship. To address a lump of stone is already to have a concept of it which goes *beyond* the idea of it as a lump of stone."[13]

What then makes people want to worship? Smart argues with Rudolph Otto that the experience which worship expresses is that of the numinous: the sensus *numinis* being the sui *generis*, that is, its presence being the **defining** characteristic of religion with the object of worship

11 Ninian Smart *The Concept of Worship*, 1972, 5
12 Smart, 1972, op cit 7 [italics mine]
13 Smart, op cit 11 [italics mine]

perceived as awe-inspiring.

This awe comes from the point that worship is a **relational activity** in which the "superiority of the Focus gives it greater power than the worshipper, and this gap is infinite in the case of an unboundedly Supreme Being, so that the worshipper has no relevant merit except in so far as this may be conferred on him by the Supreme Being."[14]

To say to God 'You are my Lord and King' is to "signalise my difference from God - my inferiority, his superiority. I am at the same time recognising that God is the sole source of holiness, of that substance by which I am saved"[15]

So when one worships there is a focus, an icon or symbol in the case of Christianity, which is invested with person hood and has the principle of 'power-identity' because it is a manifestation of the divine power. Smart argues that even where a God is omnipresent, he is specially present, that particular immanence involves special multi-presence:

"A derived event or entity partakes of the power of the original form from which it is derived, but still the original has the power **par excellence**."[16]

This is exemplified by Christ's risen power at the Easter celebrations and the original resurrection event, where the celebrations have the principle of power-identity with the resurrection and re-present the event .This is furthered by language used in worship: in telling God at Easter that he has raised his Son up from the dead, the worshipper is not reminding God or the congregation, but **re-presenting** the event.[17]

Smart appears to contradict this later by saying that the focus of worship is transcendent and "not to be identified with the particularities (of whichever sort) through which he is

14 Smart, 1972, op cit 41, 44
15 Smart, op cit 19
16 op cit 13
17 op cit 27

manifested."[18] He appears to change the points at which the transcendence ends and where the power-identity in the 'particularities' i.e. symbols and events begins.
A further weakness in Smart's analysis is that individual intention in worship does not explain the phenomenon of Christian worship. There must be some *commonality* of intention which makes one person's ritual within worship interpretable by another, since Christian worship originates in the commonality of New Testament patterns.
Smart's thesis that ritual is a sort of physical language also means that it must be placed within a frame of reference in which all participate at some level.

For Smart worship is about the relationship of power between the worshipper and the worshipped and it is language, physical, written and verbal, that communicates this relationship. It is also language that, as Smart notes, can be misunderstood and clouded by unintelligibility rather than mystery.

4. Relationship and Response

Evelyn Underhill approaches the subject of worship from that of religious experience and mysticism.
Her approach in her 1936 book *Worship*[19] is to emphasise both at the beginning and end of her book the *response* of humanity to the "besetting charity of God... in this movement of the abiding God towards His creature...the incentive is given to man's deepest worship, and the appeal is made to his sacrificial love: and all the kinds and degrees of Christian devotion, in prayer and in action, are ways in which he replies to this utterance of the Word."[20]

Humanity responds in worship because God first responds with grace and love. Worship is the " implicit, even though unrecognised vision of God- that disclosure of the supernatural which is overwhelming, self-giving and attractive all at once- which is the first cause of all

18 op cit 41 So he would argue against an understanding of the Eucharist as the 'real presence' of Christ, that it literally becomes the body and blood of Christ.
19 Evelyn Underhill, *Worship*, 1936
20 op cit 339

worship"[21]

So the initiative in worship is God's self-disclosure and thus worship is theocentric, with its reference being always to the Absolute and Eternal.

Worship is also about the human derived spirit perceiving and moving towards its Origin and goal, responds to the impact of Eternity thus learning the existence of Eternity and accepting their "tiny place in that secret life of Creation, which consists in the praise, adoration and manifestation of God".[22]

The enormity of God, the Eternal, the Origin, is highlighted by Underhill's 'low' view of the spiritual status of humanity. For her, humanity is not 'pure 'spirit, nor 'pure' animal but half and half, living under the conditions of space and time, yet capable of the conscious worship of a Reality that transcends both.[23]

Worship is "a responsive act which involves humanity's whole nature and therefore requires social and sensible embodiment; in visible and historical institutions which shall be entirely dedicated to adoring communion with the Unseen Perfect, and in symbolic objects and deeds which are often crude and always inadequate, yet the necessary means of religious expression"[24]

Underhill has a strong sense of the frailty of humanity and the imperfection of its worship. Its perception of God "shares the imperfections and uncertainties of the temporal order, and is often embodied in crude and mistaken forms."[25]

However, Underhill maintains that "in every form of worship-even the least adequate- the positive element, man's upward and outward movement of adoration, self-oblation and

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21 Underhill, op cit, 4

22 op clt

23 This very Western dualism in the 'obliteration of self' aspect of Underhill's theology cannot easily be applied to African Christian worship since self-hood is deeply connected with community and environment.

24 Underhil, 1936, op cit 17

25 Underhill, op cit

dependence, exceeds in importance the negative element which is inevitably present with it."[26]

What then does worship do? For Underhill, it purifies, enlightens and at last transforms every life submitted to its influence....It does all this, because it wakes up and liberates that "seed" of supernatural life, in virtue that we are spiritual beings, capable of responding to that God who is Spirit; and which indeed gives to humanity a certain mysterious kinship with Him."[27]
Although worship through religious practices points beyond the world and the natural life to an 'independent object of adoration', it also highlights the imperfection of humanity. Thus worship becomes the most effective cause of "conviction of sin" and hence of "the soul's penitence and purification; here disclosing [worship's] creative and transfiguring power."[28]

She cites four chief means for the expression of worship, forced on humanity by its situation and its own psychological characteristics:

i) **Ritual** or liturgic pattern
ii) **Symbol** or significant image
iii) **Sacrament,** in the general sense of the use of visible things and deeds, not merely to signify, but also to convey invisible realities.
iv) **Sacrifice** or voluntary offering
All the above are described as "sensible signs"... by means of which we worship and containing suprasensible truths.[29]

i) Ritual

Underhill defines religious ritual as "an agreed pattern of ceremonial movements, sounds, and verbal formulas, creating a framework within which corporate religious action can take

26 Underhil, 1937, op cit xii
27 op cit 18
28 op cit 9
29 op cit p xiii

place."[30]

This has an anthropological precedent as indicated by A.N.Whitehead who points out that ritual uses that "general tendency of living creatures to repeat their actions and thereby reexperience the accompanying emotion, which lies at the heart of the drama and the dance."[31] Christian ritual within a corporate setting (e.g. the Eucharistic liturgy) thus can act as a "powerful stimulant to the religious feeling of the worshippers."[32] It reflects and promotes the corporate nature of the worshipping community by giving people something to do and also incites them to do it: "Giving ourselves with humility to the common worship, we find that this common worship can rouse our sluggish instinct for holiness, support and enlighten our souls."[33]

In reference to the psalter, Underhill writes that the liturgic value of a part of the ritual does not just rely on the spiritual truth it conveys but also on the quality of the poetry, that which arouses and frees the 'transcendental sense'.
However she is quite aware of the dangers of ritual in worship: as it "represents the constant tendency to attach absolute value to humanity's own activities, whether personal or corporate: to assume that the precise way in which things are done is of supreme importance, and that the traditional formula has an inherent authority extending to its smallest details, from which it is blasphemy to depart."[34]

Ritual is holistic in the sense that it weaves speech, gesture, rhythm and agreed ceremonial into the worshipping action: thus "at its best can unite the physical, mental and emotional being in a single response to the Unseen."[35] Worship through ritual is thus both 'instinctive' to humanity and uses most of the senses and the use of symbol in worship further integrates our ability of thinking and image-making.

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30 Underhill, 1937, op cit p 32
31 op cit p 32 citing A.N.Whitehead, *Religion in the Making,* 20
32 op cit p 33
33 op cit
34 op cit p 34/5
35 op cit p 37

ii) Symbol

Underhill writes that it is only "by some reference -direct or oblique- to the things that are seen, that we can ever give concrete form to our intuition of that which is unseen" and although faith can make good the defects of the senses "it is no less true that the senses must also play their part in making good the limitations of faith and bringing into focus within our field of vision the far-off objects she discerns."[36]

Like Smart she acknowledges the limitations of religious symbols which, although carriers of a spiritual reality, can never be truly adequate to the fact conveyed. Her caution with symbols extends to the warning that there is a danger that the use of symbolism can lead to idolatry just as formalism can lead from ritual.

iii) Sacrament

Underhill differentiates between symbol and sacrament:
"All sacraments do and must employ symbolic methods...however,..from the point of view of cultus, symbols *represent and suggest*, whilst sacraments *work* ...this action is from God to man, not man to God."[37]
The difference between them is that of apprehending and conveying spiritual reality. The sacrament she argues is a particular use of temporal things e.g. bread and wine which gives to them the value of eternal things and thus conveys spiritual reality.

"In a general sense sacraments convey the numinous, establish a relation between human and Divine more precisely and effectively than the most august of symbols."[38]
Underhill is aware of the limitations of sacraments as being inadequate and arbitrary and the danger of formalism and exteriorization, even crass materialism. But she insists that some form or degree of sacramentalism must enter human worship, for in it "we see clearly man's deep

36 Underhill, 1937, op cit 37
37 op cit 42 [italics mine]
38 op cit 43

instinct for the supernatural...spirit giving significance to sense"[39]

iv) Sacrifice

"Worship, the response of the human creature to the Divine is summed up in sacrifice [which] may have as its immediately inciting cause awe, fear, anxiety, the impulse to propitiate, or the sense of need or guilt; for by these paths, the spirit of man is persuaded to seek communion with God."[40]

If we used the language of Ninian Smart it is the *intention* of the worshipper that makes sacrifice part of worship. "Its essence is something given ; not something given up. It is a freewill offering, a humble gesture which embodies and expresses with more or less completeness the living heart of religion; the self-giving of the creature to its God."[41]
Sacrifice is seen by Underhill as being both symbolic and sacramental, without which worship may easily degenerate into emotional admiration or on the other hand "the 'spiritual 'sacrifice without concrete embodiment lacks at least one element of costliness and is out of touch with the here-and -now realities of human life."[42]
She focusses on the transformation of the idea of sacrifice from propitiation to love which has been both evoked and expressed through the experience of worship and finds its consummation in the Christian Eucharist.
It is also about the fulfilment of the sacrificial principle in prayer and thanksgiving, with the total oblation of personality described to us by the mystics as the apex of contemplative prayer.[43]

For Underhill, Christian worship is both a personal communion and a metaphysical thirst, conditioned by Christian belief which is summed up in the dogmas of the Trinity and the

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39 Underhill, 1937, op cit 46
40 op cit 47
41 op cit p 48
42 op cit 48
43 op cit 59

Incarnation of Christ.

"Worship in its wholeness must include or imply such equal, loving and costly responses to this threefold Reality"[44]

It should also include and harmonise all the various phases of our human experience: "All levels of life and action are relevant to it; for they are covered and sanctified by the principle of incarnation."[45]

Since worship is "a response evoked by the self-disclosure of the Holy, and this disclosure as made to human sense as well as to human soul, it will be the response of man in his wholeness, accepting and using the resistance and inequalities of life as material for the expression of sacrificial love."[46]

So Underhill is both holistic and Eucharistic in her understanding of worship, that it is the response of humanity, *in all* their humanity, to the loving self-disclosure of God in Christ fully declared on Calvary and again set forth in every Eucharist, which is the free offering and consecration of the natural life so that it may become the sensible vehicle of the Divine life.[47]

It is both personal and corporate needing expressive and creative acts to weave every aspect of our human personality, physical, mental and spiritual, into its adoring recognition of the beauty and perfection of God.[48]

In contrast to Ninian Smart's more individualistic approach to worship, Evelyn Underhill's vision of worship is humanity's response to God to be both upward in adoration and awe and downwards and outwards in loving action to embrace and transform the world.

For Underhill, worship is not simply about the relationship and response between God and the believer but also relationship between God and the world in and from which the believer worships and to which God expects us to

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44 Underhill, 1937, op cit 62

45 op cit 71

46 op cit 73

47 op cit 341

48 op cit 343

respond in His way ... the way of transforming sacrificial love.

5. Doxology: Worship, Doctrine and Life

Geoffrey Wainwright in *Doxology* takes a different, theologically systematic approach to the subject of worship and focusses particularly on the themes of soteriology and eschatology within Christian worship.

Worship

Wainwright affirms that worship is communion with God based upon the relationship that God has with humanity in Christ. "The proper relationship between creature and Creator" he writes "is, in Christian eyes, the relationship of worship."[49]

Wainwright acknowledges that worship is "seen as the point of concentration at which the whole of the Christian life comes to ritual focus...in the descriptive sense of regular patterns of behaviour invested with symbolic significance."[50]

Like Underhill, Wainwright regards worship as relational but unlike Underhill he seems to see a less passive, more 'worthy' role for human beings .
"I see Christian worship, doctrine and life [having a strongly ethical component] as conjoined in a common 'upward' and 'forwards' direction towards God and the achievement of his purpose, which includes human salvation. They [all] intend God's praise. His glory is that he is already present and within to enable our transformation into his likeness, which means participation in himself and his kingdom." [51]

Universe of discourse

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49 Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life*, 1980, 16
50 Wainwright, 1980, op cit 8
51 op cit 10

He borrows insights from the 'secular ' sciences of linguistics, philosophy and social anthropology to understand the function of language in worship on the understanding that *logos* is the basis for communication and therefore the means of communion.[52]

One insight Wainwright illustrates is a 'universe of discourse':

"The common language of worship that presupposes the existence of a shared world of beliefs, ideas and experiences which enables words and phrases to convey intended meaning between speaker and hearer."[53] He focuses on the use of the Bible in church, assuming a common hermeneutical method as well as language.

Doctrine

Doctrine, he argues, both draws on and contributes to worship. Worship is a locus for the reception and transmission of the vision which is believed, formulated and reflected on. The theologian reflects, shapes and prunes the primary experience of communion with God but this depends, as shown in Wainwright's treatment of the Latin tag *lex orandi, lex credendi* [54]on the ecclesiastical standpoint of the theologian. For, he writes, traditionally Protestantism asserts the critical primacy of doctrine in relation to liturgy whereas Catholicism "has appealed to past and present liturgical practice in order to justify doctrinal positions and developments."[55]

Christology

From the embryonic Christian church of the first century to present day, it is Christology that has informed and shaped both doctrine and liturgical development.

"The continuing practice of invoking the name of Jesus in worship helped to ensure that when

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52 op cit, 8. Wainwright uses *logos* in its Greek usage for both thought and speech and its Hebraic equivalent *dabar* meaning action or event to argue that "in both God and humans *logos* is performative: it expresses being and engages the person". God is the source of *logos* in human beings, with Christ (*the Logos* cf. John 1:14) being the paradigm of worship.

53 op cit 19

54 Literally, 'the law of praying, the law of believing' (Prosper of Aquitaine c. 390-463) See Wainwright, 1980, op cit. chs 7 &8.

55 Wainwright 1980, op cit 219

the time came for more precise doctrinal definition of his person it would be in terms which did not fall short of the manner of his address in worship."[56]

Wainwright argues that the most characteristic function of Christ in Christian worship"...is understood to be mediation: he mediates human worship to God and he mediates salvation from God to humanity"[57] .

So Christ is the Logos both as the mediator of worship and source of communication.

Liturgy

The mode of communication and the meaning of communion between Creator and created has its symbolic focus in liturgy , the language of worship. "Into the liturgy the people bring their entire existence so that it may be gathered up in praise. From the liturgy the people depart with a renewed vision of the value -patterns of God's kingdom, by the more effective practice of which they intend to glorify God in their whole life."[58]

However, for Wainwright liturgy alone does not express the human 'doxology' but has to be in the context of dogma and ethics.

To confirm the significance of liturgical worship (*lex orandi*) Wainwright examines the Christological developments in the Patristic period, drawing attention to the sacramental issues that arose and subsequently shaped doctrine[59].

However he makes the general statement that "the human words and acts used in worship are a doctrinal locus in so far as either God makes them the vehicle of his self-communication or they are fitting responses to God's presence and action"[60] and he maintains a dominant *lex credendi* principle in suggesting some theological criteria to determine the orthodoxy of a liturgically originated doctrine.

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56 Wainwright, 1980, op cit, 48 citing Maurice Wiles: *The Making of Christian Doctrine* , Cambridge University Press, 1967, 64f

57 Wainwright 1980, op cit 66

58 op cit 8

59 op cit, 228-9, 232-4

60 op cit p 242-3

These criteria are:

i) The tests of origin; whether the ideas and practices could be traced back to Jesus or the early Church, evident in the New Testament.

ii) The test of spread in time and space; whether the liturgical practice comes near to the category of *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* [61] from within Church Tradition, particularly from the Patristic period.

iii) The test of ethical correspondence; whether the holiness (and in particular the *ethical* component of holiness)of a Church indwelt and led by the Holy Spirit gives authority to its liturgical practice.

These criteria come from his particular Protestant perspective and can be challenged by other perspectives such as those who hold a sacrificial understanding of the Eucharist who may well perceive that their life of ministry and service in and to the world "is to be one of sacrificial self-offering in union with Christ into whose own pattern of self-offering, celebrated and actualised in the Eucharist, they have been and are to be conformed."[62]

For Wainwright, Christian worship is about a personal relationship with God, mediated through Christ and expressed through liturgy determined primarily by doctrine having been established by scripture, tradition and holiness evident in the Church's pattern of life and marked by eschatological tension. It is by God's grace that the worshipper is being changed from glory into glory until God's kingdom and salvation already anticipated in earthly worship are fully realised.[63]

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61 Wainwright 1980, op cit, 243 citing St. Vincent of Lerin's definition of orthodoxy:' what everywhere, what always, what by all (has been believed)'.
Wainwright does however question the universality within Church Tradition of infant baptism, the Eucharistic sacrifice and the Marian cult as sources of doctrine. op cit 139-142; 268-74;237-40 respectively.

62 Maxwell Johnson "Liturgy and Theology" in P.Bradshaw & B.Spinks (Eds.) *Liturgy in Dialogue* 1993, 215

63 Wainwright 1980, 462, 583

5. Ordo and ecclesiology: An Orthodox approach

The basis of Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemann's understanding of worship in his *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* is that theology must be rooted in the experience of faith itself which is given and received in the Church's *leitourgi* for it is worship which gives the Church self-understanding.
His concern in this book is to establish a theological methodology to explain what the liturgical experience (worship) is, how it relates to theological concepts within faith and doctrine of the Church and to connect it with the rule of prayer, *lex orandi.*

"In order to sense worship as something more than a 'public cult' it is necessary to see and sense the Church as something more than a society of believers."[64]
Worship, he writes, is "inseparable from the Church and without it there is no Church. But this is because its purpose is to express, form or realise the Church- to be the source of that grace which always makes the Church the Church, the people of God...[embodying] her participation in God's kingdom...the highest and fullest expression and fulfilment of her nature: of her unity and love; of her knowledge of and communion with God."[65]

Like Underhill and Wainwright,Schmemann affirms the need for the Church to acknowledge - and embrace- the humanity within and without. The Orthodox Church, to which he particularly speaks, has been merged with worship and has come to be understood as a sacramentally hierarchical institution existing for the *performance* of divine worship...the liturgy of which has ceased to be the *expression* of Church worship and expression of the Church in relation to the world. Instead the worship is experienced as a 'break' in earthly existence.[66]

Ordo: The unchanging principle

He challenges the Church to recapture the 'epiphany' of its faith by the principle of 'Ordo',

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64 Alexander Schmemann *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*,1966, 11
65 op cit 23
66 op cit 25

that is, "the unchanging principle , the living norm or 'logos' of worship as a whole, within what is accidental and temporary."[67]

The "Ordo" is based on the apostolic and early Church understanding and revelation of the co-relation between the eschatological, ecclesial and cosmological existing liturgically of which the Eucharist and the liturgy of time are the connected bases.[68] This Ordo he argues has been obscured by (Western) scholastic theology and 'mysteriological piety' and has changed the understanding and experience of liturgy.[69]

Renewal of liturgy?

Schmemann who inadvertently reflects the unchanging nature of the Orthodox Liturgy which has remained the same for over a millennium, does not believe in liturgical renewal or reform as much as a renewed understanding of the apostolic theological principle of the Ordo which is itself unchanging.[70]

"What is needed more than anything else is an entrance into the life of worship, into life in the rhythm of worship. What is needed is not so much the intellectual apprehension of worship as its apprehension through experience and prayer."[71]

To reform the liturgy (without relating it to the lex *credendi*) is for Schmemann to view it "as an end in itself and not as the 'epiphany ' of the Church's faith, of her experience in Christ of herself, the World and the Kingdom."[72]

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67 Schmemann, 1966, op cit 32

68 'Liturgy of time' meaning the daily offices, the weekly cycle and the yearly cycle of the Orthodox Church liturgy, op cit, 38. See pp40-71 for further explanation of the origin of the Ordo.

69 Maxwell Johnson 1993, op cit 208

70 In this respect Schmemann has a similar aim, although different theological method, to Wainwright of the reintegration of liturgy, theology and piety (worship, doctrine and life)

71 op cit, 19

72 Schmemann:"Liturgical Theology, Theology of Liturgy and Liturgical Reform" *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 1969 222 cited by Maxwell Johnson,1993, op cit 207

For Schmemann, the *lex orandi* is the source of theological reflection, although he does not deny the importance of Scripture and Tradition as sources.[73] Liturgical worship should be seen as a whole and not just as words or rituals:

"Worship simply cannot be equated either with texts or with forms of worship. It is a whole, within which everything , the words of prayer, lections, chanting, ceremonies, the relationship of all these things in a 'sequence' or 'order' and finally what can be defined as the 'liturgical coefficient' of each of these elements (i.e. that significance which, apart from its own immediate content each acquires as a result of its place in the general 'sequence ' or order of worship) only all this together defines the meaning of the whole and is therefore the proper subject of study and theological evaluation."[74]

So Schmemann puts forward his own theological method and reflection in the assertion of the unchanging, uniting and historical 'Ordo' principle as the basis for understanding 'experience and prayer' in worship and although he is against liturgical reform 'for its own sake', Schmemann challenges us in the West to take the *experience* and conscious study of worship seriously in order to understand a particular religious tradition.[75]

6. Other perspectives on worship

To describe the nature and purpose of worship is, as we have seen, a complex task by which the church describes its purpose and function.

As means of contrast we shall have a brief overview of other approaches to understanding worship.

i) Worship as Theatre

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73 op cit 14-15

74 op cit 15-16

75 This recognition of the experience of worship is *fundamental* to an understanding of the concept of 'inculturation 'of liturgy which we shall be examining later.

Kieran Flanagan[76] takes a sociological approach to the issue of worship using the analogies of theatrical life, in which the worshipper is the actor. Of liturgy he cites I.H. Dalmais: "Liturgy belongs in the order of 'doing', not of knowing' (logos). Logical thought cannot get very far with it; liturgical actions yield their intelligibility in their performance and this performance takes place entirely at the level of sensible realities"[77]

Flanagan is concerned that people are allowed to struggle with the meaning of the liturgy but also that liturgical rites are recentred in their "theological nexus".

He is highly critical of the thinking surrounding liturgical developments of Vatican II, accusing it of being out of touch with the romanticism and mystery of the counter-culture of the time with its "threadbare rites", that in the efforts to make them relevant made them "curiously irrelevant".[78]

ii) Moving from a leisure activity...

Robin Morrison[79] writing from an Anglican perspective makes an interesting point about integrating the 'working' life with the 'worshipping' life. " By associating worshipping on Sunday with the 'day of rest' we have turned our religion into a *leisure club activity* for those who have the wealth, time, power, *language* and education to take advantage of it. We have excluded from the meaning of the liturgy the Monday to Friday realities which everyone lives in, both for an expression and definition of their identity and purpose...Did God really intend that the meaning of all life should be reduced to what takes place in a church service?"[80]

He calls for an Incarnation-based understanding of liturgy and particularly the Eucharist "so that the risen Christ may be experienced in the liturgy which bridges the act of eating and

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76 Kieran Flanagan *Sociology and Liturgy: Representations of the Holy*, 1991

77 I.H.Dalmais in Aime Georges Martimort (Ed.) "The Church at Prayer' (vol 1) *Principles of Liturgy* (Trans. Matthew J.O'Connell, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1987, 259) cited by Flanagan 1991 op cit, 34

78 Flanagan 1991 op cit, 38

79 Robin Morrison *The World of Work: Reflections on realities as part of church concern for liturgical thinking* ,1995

80 Morrison 1995, op cit 2,5 [italics mine]

drinking with those experiences of daily life."[81]

iii) Worship 'in alien dress'

David N. Power in his collection of essays related to worship, theology and culture argues that from the beginning (citing Acts) Christianity "has always arrived in an alien dress and so has always been faced with the problem of a fusion of cultures"[82]

And today, Power asserts, religion is not interwoven with culture, is not cohesive and not a given. Religion doesn't link people together.

"patterns have been unwoven, so that there are no holy centres from which a group derives undisputed value and meaning..Nonetheless, those who live by faith remain convinced that to them at least it [religion] should be the source and focal point of meaning in life."[83]

iv) Seeking 'appropriate' liturgy

Robin Green takes a Christian existentialist approach to worship, based on a view of human personality as sacramental, made in the image of God. He states sharply that "inappropriate liturgy [to the given pastoral scenario] can strip us of our sense of worth and dignity"[84] whereas appropriate liturgy can provide people with an environment of meaning, a space in which people are "sustained, guided, healed and reconciled" through and to God, to each other and themselves.

It can provide an environment of belonging in which symbols play an important part and cites Douglas Davies:

"symbols can bring an individual to integrate disparate experiences of life."[85]

It can provide an environment of history and memory, giving a sense of continuity and a personal identity and an environment for telling the story." Liturgy is a kind of passage from

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81 op cit, 6

82 David N. Power *Worship, culture and theology*, 1990 39

83 op cit 40

84 Robin Green *Only Connect*,1987,5-17

85 Douglas Davies, *The Broken Symbol*, British Association of Counselling, 1980 cited by Green 1987 op cit, 15

feeling to meaning...It goes on retelling the story of Jesus because through that story we are to make sense of our own stories."

This environment affirms the worth of the individual, bringing them from alienation from God, others or our "true being" into communion or "friendship" through Christ with God, others and our true selves. [86]

7. African perspectives

Francois Lumbala, African Roman Catholic liturgist, focusses on the importance of symbols to explain why ritual and worship are the most appropriate expression of our experience of God. "Represented in symbols, the experience of God fascinates us, attracts us, and yet always withdraws. Simultaneously veiling and revealing, symbols summon us to move beyond what is visible. Hence the importance of liturgy in any church, especially in a church intent on a mission of inculturation."[87]

He asserts that humanity's creation and destination is to be in a Parent-child relationship with God and to know the liberation and salvation that come from Christ. To explain and elucidate African cultural elements which according to Lumbala had been rejected and disparaged by colonialism, in a new, affirming light through 'inculturation' constitutes a step toward liberation.

"Christ has come to liberate human beings and to save them. That liberation goes far beyond health, nutrition, and political liberation, which are but manifestations of the coming Reign of God. We are created for God, we have been made to live with God, and we have been gathered together for the praise of our divine Parent. To achieve an 'inculturation' of the liturgy that succeeds in this in the churches of Africa is to seize upon the activity that provides a foundation and gives meaning to all other activities and witnessing of our churches."[88]

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86 See also Michael B.Aune "'But Only Say The Word: Another Look at Christian Worship as Therapeutic", *Pastoral Psychology Vol 41:3, 1993*, 145-157 who explores the common ground between human 'personal relations' experience and religious experience

87 Francois Kabasele Lumbala "Africans Celebrate Jesus Christ" in *Paths of African Theology* Ed. Gibellini, 1995, 78

88 Lumbala 1995 op cit, 82

Lumbala, like several of the other commentators, stresses the importance of the Incarnation in understanding Christian worship (in particular new, culturally-relevant rites) which he describes strikingly:

"The incarnation of God in the history of human beings occurred at a particular moment- in Jewish space and culture. In this dimension it is unique and constitutes a monument and jewel in the history of humanity...We Christians are interested in this monument because we set it as an archetype of a continuing phenomenon in the history of human beings with God...The Jewish Christ interests us only because instead of making Jews of us all, he has transcended the concrete context of his incarnation to become the Alpha and Omega of all human history."[89]

For Lumbala, inculturated Christian worship is the foundation and substantiality for the Church's mission and ministry for it embraces the human condition in its cultural realisations and "stirs the inexhaustible energy of the Incarnation."[90]

8. Inculturation as a dialogue between worship and culture

"Inculturation is the dynamic relation between the Christian message and culture or cultures; an insertion of the Christian life into a culture; an ongoing process of reciprocal and critical interaction and assimilation between them"[91]

'Inculturation' is a contemporary, perhaps slightly nebulous, term used initially by social anthropologists and since adopted by both theologians and liturgists as meaning a dynamic relation between the Christian message and a particular culture in a way that allows both to

89 Lumbala 1995, op cit,79

90 Giuseppe Alberigo, address to the Bologna Colloquium, 1988 cited by Lumbala 1995, op cit, 80

91 M. de Azevedo "Inculturation and the Challenge of Modernity" Gregorian University Rome,1982 cited by Gerald Arbuckle in *Earthing the Gospel*, 1990, 17

reciprocate, interact and assimilate with each other.

As we have already seen in Lumbala's use of the term, inculturation is a way of relating worship, theology and culture that challenges the Church to acknowledge its own historical cultural 'baggage' ; to express the Gospel message in ways that engage with the whole person in their cultural context and into which the Gospel is placed and grows.

As an approach to liturgy, inculturation has had the theoretical approval of both Roman Catholic and Anglican hierarchies, with implementation coming more readily from within the Catholic church (with or without 'official' approval cf.the Zaire Mass).
However the widespread out workings of inculturation are still at an embryonic stage since there is some concern that the authority of Scripture and Tradition could be compromised for the sake of cultural relevance.
The challenge of inculturation is that within liturgical worship it would not simply be a matter of changing a few words in an existing, culturally-*alienating* liturgy but acknowledging different world-views, different approaches to theology, which will create new culturally-*relevant* liturgies.

The self-conscious development of inculturation within liturgy could be described as a 'sign of the times', a by-product of the Liturgical Movement in which people have sought to understand their Christian identity and its expression and often changing understandings have required a change in texts. [92]

The liturgical movement has attempted to incarnate the rediscovery of the New Testament image of the Church as the **body of Christ** so that worship is no longer a spectacle but a community action- a shift which leads to a discovery of the potentially cohesive power of ritual and ceremony.[93]

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92 John Fenwick & Bryan Spinks *Worship in Transition* ,1995, 2
93 Fenwick & Spinks 1995 op cit 6

Inculturation: a right approach?

Inculturation as an approach to worship and particularly liturgy is not without its critics.For example, Kieran Flanagan critiques modern Catholic 'indigenisation' of liturgy by questioning the necessity to adjust the cultural form of a rite to the needs of the people with the notion "that social arrangements for worship can and *do* make a difference"[94] ; that indigenisation takes the liturgists "to the edge of a sociological frame of reference" (implying that they quickly fall *off* that edge!) and that, from a sociologist's perspective, a systematic understanding of ritual seems to be missing from the literature.

He asks the important question of 'inculturation' (which he uses interchangeably with 'indigenisation') to confront the sociological questions "as to what difference these differences in styles of enactment make and how they are to be understood within their cultural frame of reference and reception."[95]

Flanagan rightly challenges liturgists to acknowledge their cultural assumptions and to ask why they are advocating alternative forms of rite and that if the inculturated liturgies are to be more than a response to theological and liturgical *Zeitgeist* then they will need to interact with other disciplines, such as sociology, in order to be adequate for the particular culture in all its complexities. Furthermore, he argues, the cultural basis of rite has to be made *explicit* before it can be converted into the implicit to allow the holy to be revealed in all its glory.
So his sociological insight is helpful as we approach the challenges that the modern liturgical and theological phenomena of 'inculturation' give us.

Schmemann writes of the modern Liturgical Movement that it has appeared everywhere closely bound up with a theological, missionary and spiritual revival and which, I would add, has spawned inculturation.

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94 Flanagan 1991, op cit, 40. "...in one sense the cultural is irrelevant in that it ultimately does not matter...Religious things are *pure by right*...[which is highlighted by reverence] Reverence involves a sense of limit, a selective use of the cultural that carries an element of denial of self in the liturgical act, whose purpose is to affirm that which lies beyond the actor's grasp."[italics mine] 42-44

95 Flanagan 1991,op cit 41

It has also provided much needed theological reflection, as it became clear that "without theological 'reflection' the liturgical revival was threatened either by an excessive submission to 'the demands of the day', to the radical nature of certain 'missionary' and 'pastoral' movements quite prepared to drop old forms without a second thought or, on the other hand, by a peculiar archeologism which considers the restoration of worship in its 'primitive purity' as the panacea for all contemporary ills."[96]

In regard to 'inculturation' David N. Power starts from liberation theology, that worship is foundational and integral to the struggle for freedom and that inculturation takes place naturally when the liberating message of the Gospel is joined with the liberation struggle of local communities. "Inculturation of the Gospel brings a new healing , purification and transformation of culture."[97] He argues that the fundamental symbolic modes of perceiving and experiencing reality are *culturally specified.* This is expressed in the body language used: "in any culture, the bodily postures of resting, eating, sharing, assembling, purifying, greeting, reconciling, dissociating and the like, shows a people's fundamental perceptions."[98]

Aidan Kavanagh is critical of one of the systemic approach of Catholicism's main advocates of inculturation, Aylward Shorter, arguing that inculturation is not as Shorter insists a matter of systemic but happens over history. He is highly critical of Shorter's reference to liturgy as "a field for the exercise of hierarchical power"[99] and defends the institutional thinking on evangelisation and culture (but acknowledges that inculturation raises the whole issue of ecclesiology) . His conservatism shows itself in his reference to the existing Roman liturgy as "an obedient standing in the alarming presence of the living God in Christ."[100]

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96 Schmemann 1966, op cit 12-13

97 op cit 68, 69

98 op cit 71

99 Aidan Kavanagh "Liturgical Inculturation, Looking to the Future", *Studia Liturgica* 20:1,1990, 97

100 Kavanagh1990 op cit 102

9. Conclusion: A theology of worship

Christian worship is dialogue with God. It is two-way communication with the initiative always from God. It is theology expressed in the everyday; it is doctrine spoken, sung and prayed. It is mission communicating the Christian message in ritual, language, music and symbolism to the world.It is ecclesiology demonstrated through corporate gathering, the outworking of the body of Christ. Above all, it is response to the Creator, Lover and Redeemer of the world in Christ. It establishes and endorses the relationship of humanity to God.It is the Trinity at work, creating and inspiring God's people to live in the love that binds the Three and that is shared to those whose hearts are open...

Worship reveals the intention of God that we may live in relationship with Him and our acts of worship are the 'love -talk' between us and God. It communicates the unity of love in God to one another and thus it is an act of fellowship, of koinonia, which builds up the Church in "bonds of union", the interior graces and gifts of the one Holy Spirit cf. 1 Cor 12: 4-11. Worship is therefore crucial to the development of the Christian faith, both on an individual and a corporate level.

But the praxis of worship has had an historical reputation of causing church division both on a local and national level. It has highlighted the differences of precisely the areas we have mentioned and is often the focus or 'cause' of disunity with a distinct lack of Christian love and understanding.

Inculturation and worship

Inculturation of worship has, in one sense, happened since the beginning of the Christian Church, where people of different cultures, Jewish and Greek, forced the fledgling Church to establish universal practices after considerable debate over issues such as circumcision[101] .

The approach of our main commentators highlight several important factors which are appropriate to our task of exploring inculturation and its application within the liturgical life of the Christian Church, particularly in Africa:

[101] The circumcision debate cf. Acts 15:1-11; Romans 2:25-29

i) Smart's emphasis on the physical, written and verbal **language** between the worshipper and the worshipped (God) reflects what is central to personal worship: our spiritual and physical communication with God and to corporate worship within the Christian community and in order to proclaim the gospel, expressed to the world.

ii) Underhill's emphasis on a **holistic** understanding of worship where *all* levels of life are relevant, being "covered and sanctified by the principle of incarnation" are fundamental to inculturation.

iii) Wainwright highlights a **personal relationship with God** which, like Underhill's emphasis upon 'communion with the Unseen Perfect' is the focus of worship, but for Wainwright is mediated through Christ and expressed first in doctrine.

iv) Schmemann's focus upon the importance of the **experience of faith** in the context of the rhythm of Church worship reminds us that worship is as much about Christian faith living and growing as the texts adopted for this purpose

For our purpose. we will combine language and religious and cultural experience under **Identity** cf. Barney's model of culture; a personal relationship with God as **Relationships** and a holistic approach as **Response**.

CHAPTER FIVE

BEING "OF THE TRIBE OF GOD"[1] :INCULTURATED CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IN AFRICA

1. Introduction

We have already asserted that to accept the principle of inculturation within Christianity as the means to relate the Gospel of Christ to the culture in which it is being proclaimed and lived out is to accept an on-going, developing process: inculturation by definition is dynamic as culture is dynamic. However there is always a danger within this process that the Church becomes a cultural chameleon, only superficially changing its theological and liturgical colours to suit the current cultural changes.

One very significant way that the African Church has faced the challenge of being a 'cultural chameleon' is the development within this century of indigenous churches where there has been a theological and ecclesiological response to African culture from 'within'.
The African Initiated or Instituted Churches[2] (AICs) challenge the 'mission-church' denominations i.e. Protestant and Catholic, with an inculturation of Christianity that is truly African and distinctively different from them. It is the difference that tends to sit rather uncomfortably with the 'Western' denominations for a number of reasons, not least that they have often emerged (or been expelled) from the Western mission churches.

2. African Initiated Churches: A unique challenge to the Western Church

Barrett describes the search for new expression of the Christian gospel as "reformulation' to which the AIC movement is making a particular contribution.
"'The movement's emphasis on community, smaller-scale bodies, restructuring of the Church

[1] "We are humans but we are also of the tribe of God through our baptism" Alphonse N. Mushete, citing Nkongolo wa Mbiye *Le culture des esprits*, Kinshasa , 1974, 8
[2] Formerly known as 'African Independent or Indigenous Churches'

for mission, lay apostolate and the church as existing for others, constitute an indigenous African contribution to the contemporary surge of Christian reformulation on other continents."[3]

The AIC movement is also unique in Christian history in several ways, not least " its vast scale [*at least* 5000 different churches across sub-Saharan Africa estimated by the year 2000], persistence and development, by its phenomenal yet predictable spread across one-third of Africa's tribal societies..."

Tribal Zeitgeist

Within the history of African Christianity there has been a significant growth in indigenous churches that have grown out of mission churches. David Barrett, who made an extensive study of the AICs in the 1960's, describes this movement of indigenous African churches as "working quite spontaneously and in the main independently ...engaged in a massive and largely unconscious attempt to synthesise the apostolic 'kerygma' with authentic African insight based on the biblical criteria derived from vernacular translations of the Scriptures. As a result, they represent a remarkable new initiative within African society to counteract the forces of disintegration...the gradual emergence of an unorthodox but genuinely indigenous renewal of Christianity *in terms that can be understood* by African societies."[4]

Barrett's conclusions come out of the observation of many African tribes and the incidence of Independent Churches arising out of them which he describes as the"'Tribal Zeitgeist", that is, "the socio-religious climate of opinion favouring independency, protest or renewal in a given tribe at a given time" which creates a scale of religious tension for a tribal unit.[5]

Barrett's thesis is that this religious tension is a prerequisite to the emergence of an Independent Church within a tribal unit and the religious tension emerges from cultural and religious factors. In his 'Zeitgeist' scale, he includes the presence of such factors as polygyny; ancestral cults; earth goddesses; the time-scale of colonial rule and the arrival of the missions; the publication of the Bible in the vernacular; the density of Protestant missionaries and the percentages of

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3 Barrett, op cit 277

4 David B Barrett *Schism and Renewal in Africa* ,1968, 278 [italics mine]

5 op cit, 109

Protestants and Catholics in the tribe.[6]

These factors combined, to a greater or lesser extent, to create a predisposition to an indigenous form of Christianity.

For Barrett this highlighted the integrated nature of a tribe's social structure, meaning that "no enforced change can take place in one area without affecting all the others; for politics, law, religion, art, language, culture and society are all closely interlocked in a balanced and self-righting system." [7] which is another way of affirming the African dictum; "we are, therefore I am".

3. The development of AICs

Barrett is highly critical of the early missionaries who made little attempt to discern points of preparedness for the Gospel in traditional religion and with the translation of the complete Bible"...African societies gradually began to discern a serious discrepancy between missions and biblical religion in connection with the traditional institutions under attack [like polygyny]...It became most severe in those tribes which had had both foreign missions and vernacular Bible for a long periods, with neither the liberty to practise within the Church the institutions apparently sanctioned by the Old Testament; nor the liberty of new converts to govern their own churches sanctioned by the New."

The irony lies in the missions' translation of the Bible into vernacular which, as in the Protestant Reformation, became the tool of criticism of the status quo in the peoples' hands and became for African societies an independent standard of reference to legitimise their grievances. These grievances became articulated in certain biblical themes but centred around the desire to manage church affairs free from foreign control; to shake off white political domination; to emphasise the Spirit or *pneuma* and the desire to experience "biblical release" from sickness, witchcraft and sorcery. In short, they wanted to control their own destinies "by exercising biblical power promised to the people of God and derived from *pneuma*".[8]

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6 Barrett 1968, op cit 109

7 op cit, 265

8 op cit, 269

Those 'tribal units' who came from a position of 'biblical power', reacted against the "force vitale"[9] of the white missions in a recognisably Christian way with messianism, millenialism and the various forms of Christian prophetic movement.

Barrett [10] highlights other features of the indigenous Christianity that have emerged from the AICs:

i) The centrality of the historical Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

This would include a central confession or formal acknowledgement of Christ as Lord, using vernacular terms for chief ship or lordship; a marked resurgence of African custom and world view and a strong affirmation of their right to be both fully African and fully Christian, independent of foreign pressures.

ii) A complex of new religious forms marked by three themes: biblicism, africanism and *philadelphia* [11] .

i) A new type of community

Barrett sees the emergence of new indigenous churches as a response to the destruction of the old societal forms within a tribe. That they are, in effect, building a new type of community , "a restructuring of society which replaces the old tribe by the new church often with its own closely-integrated institutions, customs, beliefs and laws, in which the mass of innovatory ideas and practices serves to bring about a quite new social cohesion in a disintegrating society. This new society, then, becomes a place to feel at home, capable of fulfilling the same mediating role in the new secular world as the traditional tribal complex played in the old."[12]

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9 Barrett, 1967, op cit, 267 Africans "had failed to obtain the *force vitale*, the mysterious power of the whites -either material, financial, cultural, religious, spiritual or ecclesiastical. Their societies were not being fulfilled by the new religion , but were being demolished."

10 op cit, 273

11 'brotherly love'

12 op cit, 275

ii) The power of prayer

In his critique of the African Indigenous church movement, Zablon Nthamburi[13] adds prayer as a significant feature of the AICs and that the African attitude to prayer is one of great humility, reverence and submission.

Pockets are emptied of all money and other objects that may distract one's devotion, since one is expected to demonstrate human vulnerability and unworthiness before the creator. The community prays together, thus emphasising community cohesiveness. Such fellowship includes not only those who are gathered together at a particular place but all God's people, including not only the living "Among the Kimbanguists[14] Christians personal prayer is very important for all occasions- whether before sleep, before having a meal or before work. In public prayer Kimbanguists remove their shoes before entering the sanctuary.. members of the community but the living-dead as well."[15]

Nthamburi asserts that what these churches have learned from African traditional religiosity is "the place of prayer in the life of a community. The church is, above all else, a praying community. It is only after meaningful fellowship and prayer that the church can go out to evangelise by the strength of the Holy Spirit."[16]

"The place of prayer is therefore reflected in all aspects of life. Indigenous churches know that Africans cannot dichotomise life and so combine mundane and spiritual spheres of life shown particularly in prayer. A holistic understanding of life is crucial for the *modus operandi* of

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13 Zablon Nthamburi "Toward Indigenisation of Christia nity in Africa: a Missiological Task", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, July 1989, 112-118

14 The Kimbanguist Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo was founded by Simon Kimbangu in N'Kamba in early 1921 where he started a powerful prophetic ministry in which thousands were converted, miracles were performed and his followers were exhorted to abandon fetishes, give up polygamy and dancing. He soon aroused the anger of the then Belgian colonial government and the jealousy of missionaries.By September 1921 Kimbangu, a pacifist, was arrested, accused of treason and insurrection and sentenced to death. This sentence was modified to life imprisonment where he spent the next thirty years mainly in solitary confinement. He died in prison in 1951.
However the Kimbanguist church continued to grow despite persecution and the' Church of Jesus Christ on Earth through Simon Kimbangu' gained official recognition after the country's independence. It now has a membership of several million, is self-supporting and continues an indigenous holistic ministry, with faith-healing and exorcisms.
For further reading: Marie-Louise Martin:*Kimbangu: An African Prophet and his Church*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1975; Also Fashole-Luke et al. (Eds.) *Christianity in Independent Africa* 1978

15 Nthamburi 1989 op cit 117

16 Nthamburi op cit 117

missions in Africa."[17]

It is this holistic approach to mission reflected in the prayer life of African Indigenous Churches that can be seen developing among the Western-originated churches in sub-Saharan Africa within African Theology and inculturated liturgies.

4. An example: The African Church of the Holy Spirit, Kenya

Within Kenya alone there are 200 different Independent churches and one example is the African Church of the Holy Spirit (ACHS) or "Ruwe" Church, which originated in Kisumu, western Kenya and now based in Kakakmega, Lugala which estimates around 500,000 members across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

A personal interview with the Ruwe bishop of Nairobi, 1994[18].

In 1927 the Ruwe Church was started by the founding members Alfayo Odongo Mango and Lawi Oboni having been 'sent away' [not broken off from, but expelled] from a Quaker group in Kisumu, western Kenya. They built a church in Lunga Lunga which was later destroyed by fire (? cause) with Mango and Oboni still inside. They died in the fire and are now regarded as saints and martyrs.

These charismatic Quakers identified themselves with white clothes and the sign of the cross in red on them, identifying them with Christ as well as white turbans (men) white scarfs (women)..these clothes were all 'directed to' in prophecy.

The 'shape' of the worship is called the "programme", dominated by the theme of repentance and preaching as well as reports of dreams which are taken to the local elders to interpret. An Anglican influence is evident with the singing of psalms collectively and the recitation of the Ten Commandments and the Apostle's Creed.

The official opening of the meeting includes: repentance as a response to the dreams; driving off demons- clapping and praying to clear "holy ground" for worship; singing and prayer ;

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17 op cit

18 From a personal inerview with the Ruwe Bishop of Nairobi 27.6.94, Nairobi University, Kenya

preaching and closing the meeting with prayer and 'driving off demons'.

"Secrets [i.e. negative aspects of a person's life that are hidden] are shown in the spiritual ecstasy. The demons vary to different situations. Different sicknesses are highlighted by the prophet. The priest then asks you about it and the response is recognition and repentance. Prayer neutralises demons."

Regular, structured daily prayer is very central to their life, as is the 'holy' month of May when their founders are remembered. In May there are strict observations including a 'pastor exchange' who only pray for the month and are fed by members of the church in turn and an abstention from work and sexual relations.

The Ruwe Church characterises much of the features of AICs in East Africa:
- often perceived as a political threat by local government
- developing from mainstream (Western) churches or meetings.
- initiated by a charismatic personality.
- a freedom to pray, worship and dance in a style that is familiar.
- a strong emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit and full acceptance of charismatic gifts such as healing, prophecy, dreams and visions.

A millenialist church with strong belief in faith healing, the Ruwe church initially refused medical treatment and also refused to work, in order to pray. However, from the 1960's to know the value of money, to work, have business and work on the land became acceptable, as did education, previously regarded as "wrong tricks".

5. The challenge of the AICs

i) Urban faith

The spread of the AIC movement often results through migrants, labourers and traders and the churches are often concentrated in urban areas. In Nairobi, the ACHS was predominant in a deprived, densely populated and transient area of the city.

If we accept Barrett's supposition of the AIC movement's emphasis on community, then in an area where there are a lot of transient, rootless people then the need for familiarity and a sense of belonging are greater in an 'alien' environment. Perhaps then, inculturation as demonstrated in urban AICs is a particularly appropriate response to the negative social, religious and spiritual effects of urbanisation?

ii) Of "Politics and religion"

In his study of the AICs, Barrett argues that the changing political climate after the Berlin Conference of 1885 affected the relationship between the European administrators and the missions on matters of African traditional religion.
Before this, he argues, the missions were co-partners with the administrations in "opposing on humanitarian grounds such features of traditional societies as human sacrifice, ritual murder, tribal warfare, corruption and indigenous slavery... However after the Berlin Conference of 1885 with its partitioning of Africa, missions in many areas attempted to press their advantage by extending on religious grounds the attack on traditional society but in this, to their dismay, the colonial governments declined to support them. Thereafter, the two increasingly parted company in this respect."[19]

Barrett argues that there was from then on, a shift of attitude among missionaries: that African society appeared to be inferior to European society; that medical progress meant more Europeans could live in the tropics which had the effect of replacing existing competent African workers and lessening the social interaction with Africans as they became more self-contained with their families included.There was also increasingly direct control from Europe with technological advances and a lack of serious ethnographic literature which continued and worsened the ignorance of African world view.[20]

Barrett is highly critical of the early missions' lack of preparation for the spread of the Christian gospel in traditional religion and sees the development of the African Independent Churches as a direct reaction to this. Barrett is also scathing about an increasing discrepancy between the

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19 op cit 265
20 op cit 266

Christian message of hope and re-creation and the actions of the missions which were deconstructing rather than building African societies:

"Hope was replaced by frustration and resentment as they saw their traditional complex further disrupted by the expansion of white settler areas and the growth of towns...They had failed to obtain the *force vitale*, the mysterious power of the whites-either material, financial, cultural, religious, spiritual or ecclesiastical. Their societies were not being fulfilled by the new religion, but were being demolished."[21]

iii) The impact of AICs

Since Barrett's study in the late 1960's there has been, perhaps partly in response to the rapid growth of the AICs, a growing awareness on the part of the historic mission churches of the need for Africans to feel 'at home' with the worship.

This was formalised generally in the Roman Catholic Church in Vatican II, *Concilium Sacramentum* and voiced by Pope Paul VI who declared in Uganda in 1969 that 'Africans may and must have an African liturgy' .The present Pope, John Paul II added ,in Nairobi in 1980, that 'not only is Christianity relevant to Africa...but Christ, in the members of his body, is himself African.' [22]

In his Apostolic letter *Vice simus quintus amus* Pope John Paul II described the attempt to make the [Roman] liturgy to take root in different cultures as an important task for liturgical renewal. That there must be welcoming , where necessary , of cultural values "which are compatible with the true and authentic spirit of the liturgy, always respecting the substantial unity of the Roman rite as expressed in the liturgical books."[23]

One can detect from these papal statements both an enthusiasm and a reservation about liturgy that 'takes root' in different cultures while maintaining its 'true and authentic spirit' and that if they seem to be at odds then the latter has priority. A prime example of an attempt to root the Roman liturgy into African culture is the experimental Zaire Mass.

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21 op cit 267/8

22 Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, cited by Christopher Walsh "Of Sazda and Sacraments", *Liturgy vol 8:4*, 1984, 140,137

23 Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter: *Vice simus quintus amus*, 4.12.88 n.16

6. The Zaire Mass: An experiment in inculturated liturgy

In July 1969 Pope Paul VI addressed a symposium of the bishop of Africa in Kampala and said: "From this point of view, a certain pluralism is not only legitimate, but desirable. An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favoured by the Church. The liturgical renewal is a living example of this."[24]

So the challenge of what we now call inculturation of the liturgy, contained in the teaching of Vatican II and implied in this statement was put to the bishops of Africa. Within a matter of months, a permanent committee of the Zairean bishops initiated the project of what was referred to as "an African Mass".

In Zaire the ground was fertile in terms of Roman Catholic liturgical renewal, which had a proportionately large Catholic population and whose missionaries were mostly of Belgian origin[25]. Discussions initiated by the the liturgy constitution of Vatican II prompted the bishops to state:

"To africanize the liturgy does not mean just adopting some customs usual in the African cultural context, but to create a liturgy which incarnates the message of revelation in a specific socio-cultural context, and one which presents the mystery celebrated by the Christian community in an expressive and comprehensive manner."[26]

By the end of 1970 there was a provisional text . Since the 1969 Missal was not to be used unless it was Africanized, there was a wish to arrive to a quick result and the committee still considered the 1969 Missal as representative of the Christian tradition.[27]

In July 1971 this text was accepted by the committee and was offered to authorised centres of experimentation. After that, the text underwent various changes and by 1975 the text was

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24 *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 61 (1969) 577 cited by Raymond Maloney "The Zairean Mass and Inculturation", *Worship*, vol 62:5 (Sept 1988) 433

25The Belgian liturgical movement played a pioneering role before Vatican II.

26 Report of the permanent committee of the Zairean bishops, cited by Maloney Spet 1988, op cit 434

27 Elochukwu Uzukwu, "Inculturation of Eucharistic Celebration in Africa Today" ,*CHIEA African Christian Studies*, vol1:1 (1985) 19

basically agreed upon and has not changed substantially since then.

The formal ratification of the text of the Zaire Mass was given by the Zairean bishops in plenary session at Kinshasa in November 1986. However the 'dialogue' between the church of Zaire and the Roman authorities continues as it is seemingly still regarded by the latter as experimental[28] .

7. The structure of the Zaire Mass[29] :

Preparation

1. Invocation of the saints:

"Brothers and sisters , we who are living in earth so that this sacrifice may gather us all together into one body..." followed by the invocation to Mary; the patron saint/s; the holy people of heaven and "our ancestors".

The response is: "Be with us, be with us all."

2. 'Gloria' or other joyful song

The rubric incorporates dancing in the pews with the celebrant and other ministers dancing at the altar.

3. Opening Prayer, with the raising of hands [a sign of the oneness of the hearts of all]

The Liturgy of the Word

4. Reading , with a song

5. Dialogue before proclaiming the Gospel

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28 In 1975 the English translation of the "Rite Zairois de la Celebration Eucharistique"offered for experimental use in Zaire by the Liturgical Committee of the Episcopal Commission for Evangelization was published in the *African Ecclesiastical Review* 17 (1975) ,243-248. In 1983, the text was reproduced in Thurian and Wainwright's *Baptism and Eucharist: Ecumenical Convergence in Celebration* , 1983

29 The quoted text is taken from Thurian and Wainwright 1983, op cit,205-209

6. Proclamation of the Gospel

The people *sit* for the reading after which there is a response:

Celebrant: He who has ears to hear

People: Let him hear!

Celebrant; He who has a heart to receive

People: Let him receive!

7. Homily

8. Profession of faith or Creed

9. Penitential rite

"Brothers and sisters, the word of God has enlightened us. We know that we have not always followed it. Let us ask the Lord to give us the strength we need to lead better lives."

There is a silent pause with a physical expression of repentance with the head bowed and arm crossed on the breast.

"O Lord our God, like the insect that sticks on to our skin and sucks our blood, evil has come upon us. Our living power is weakened. Who can save us? Is it not You O Father?...

Give us strength to lead better lives, save us from falling back into the shadows ...weaken in us whatever drives us to evil...may our sins be drowned in the deep and silent waters of your mercy..."

There is the use of holy water in Solemn Mass

10. Kiss of Peace

11. Prayer of the Faithful

<u>Liturgy of the Eucharist</u>

12. Preparation of the offerings

Singing which stops when the gift-bearers [from the assembly-not the deacons] reach the

sanctuary; they include gifts for the needy of the community and they say:
"Priest of God , here is our offering. May it be a true sign of our unity."
The priest then makes a sign of gratitude; for example, clapping of hands.

Preparation of the bread and wine
Two people (not deacons) say:
"O priest of God , here is bread, here is wine; gifts of God, fruits of the earth, they are also the work of man. May they become food and drink for the kingdom of God."

13. Invitation to pray
Stand, raise hands and the priest prays over the gifts

14. Eucharistic prayer
A hand bell is rung. The celebrant says:
"Let us take heed and make ready our hearts..."
"Lord our God , we thank you, we praise you, our God and our Father, you, 'sun too bright for our gaze', you the all-powerful, you the all-seer. you, the Master of men, the Master of life, the Master of all things, it is you we praise; it is to you that we give thanks , through your Son Jesus Christ the one who is our mediator with you."
People: "Yes, he is our mediator!"
Celebrant: "Holy Father, we praise you through your Son Jesus our mediator. He is your Word, the Word that gives life. Through him you created heaven and earth; through him you created our river, the Zaire..."
People: Through him you created all things!
Celebrant: "You sent him, with the task of gathering of all people together, of making all mankind one family: your family...

15. Pre-consecratory epiclesis
With a drum or gong beaten gently until the end of the consecration.
The celebrant takes the cup: "Take this and drink from it all of you; for this is the cup of my blood , the blood of the new and everlasting pact of brotherhood..."

16. Anamnesis

17. Post-consecratory epiclesis

"...Send your Spirit upon us to gather us into unity, for we are about to eat the Body of Christ; we are about to drink the Blood of Christ..."

18. Intercessions

"Lord, be mindful of..."

For example: "...be mindful of all men who have left this earth. Be mindful of them, and receive them into your holy light.."

The Communion

19. During the Lord's Prayer the people have their arms raised in union with the celebrant.

20. Breaking of the bread and the Communion as in the Roman Missal, except that on receiving the elements the recipient replies "I believe"

21. Concluding rite as in the Roman Missal and the dismissal of which the rubric says: "Joy is the atmosphere of the final dismissal and exit. The people leave the church singing and dancing for joy."

8. A critique of the Zaire Mass

In his particular critique of this liturgy, Raymond Maloney[30] comments that the Zairean Mass is basically that of the Roman rite has introduced a number of changes which help to give it a character all of its own, which he suggests are:

i the invocation of the saints and ancestors at the beginning of the Mass

ii the relocation of the penance, together with the sign of peace, to a position after the gospel and creed and before the bidding prayers

30 Maloney Sept 1988, op cit, 435

iii the reorganisation of the presentation of the gifts

iv a modified version of the Eucharistic prayer, based on the second of the four in the Roman missal.

i) The invocation of the ancestors

Celebrant: You, our ancestors, pure of heart

People: Stay with us

Celebrant: You, who through God's help, served him faithfully.

People: Stay with us

Celebrant : Come, together, let us glorify the Lord

All: With those who are celebrating mass at this hour.

"Becoming a Christian , an African does not sever all relationship with the ancestors...invoking them in Christian worship is consequently a pastoral and liturgical imperative"[31]

Fr. L. Mpongo, Secretary of the Zairean Episcopal Commission for Evangelization stated that the Zairean theological-liturgical team's understanding of the Eucharistic assembly was influenced by African ritual of reintegration: the unity of community is experienced and expressed in communion with God, ancestors and spirits: "Because it is an assembly of ritual integration, the Eucharistic celebration of the mystery of Christ (the cause and result of the unity of Zairean Christian community) must be a joyous celebration. The colour, gestural expressions (like rhythmic swaying, tapping, and dancing) and the songs punctuated by strident cries witness to this joy."[32]

It is the theme of unity in community (both living and dead) that is so characteristic of African societies[33] and in the Zairean traditional assembly gathered for religious purposes, one cannot stand before God without being in communion with one's predecessors. So in the Eucharistic celebration the first act after the joyous entry is ritual expression of solidarity with ancestors in

31 Anscar Chupungco, *Liturgical Formation* , 31

32 L.Mpongo (1978) cited by E. Uzukwu 1985, op cit 21

33 cf Charles Nyamiti "The Mass as Divine and Ancestral Encounter Between the Living and the Dead" *CHIEA African Christian studies*, vol1:1 (1985) 28-48

the faith in litanic invocation.[34]

Charles Nyamiti writing on the theme of 'ancestor veneration'[35] expands this theme by asserting that the Roman Mass (not the Zairean Mass particularly) enables African Christians to contact all at once four types of ancestors. i)"..our own African traditional ancestors who died in the state of friendship with God.ii)..all the non-African heavenly saints including the Blessed Virgin Mary, the divine mother, ancestress of all mankind iii)... Christ Himself, the unique Brother-Ancestor of all men and the supreme eschatological fulfilment of all brother-ancestorship..[and finally] God, the Father Himself, our divine Parent-Ancestor, who is the ultimate basis and principle of all ancestor ship."[36] Nyamiti develops an ancestral theology that can be applied to the Eucharist which is based on an ancestral Trinitarian understanding of God in which the relationship and community between the three Persons is extended to solidarity with ancestors in the faith.

This highly developed, distinctly African theology of the Eucharist is not explicit in the Zaire Mass; however, to have the invocation of the ancestors at the beginning of the Eucharist highlights the importance of community at the onset. This theme continues through the Mass and should be reflected in any liturgical renewal that tries to take the African cultures seriously.

Another important aspect of the Zairean Mass is that the people sit to hear the word of God *including* the Gospel as opposed to standing which is usual Western practice. This derives from the African practise of sitting to listen to the wisdom and teaching of an elder. It is an African sign of great respect to what is being said. Since the oral tradition is such an important vehicle of communication in Africa, the spoken word assumes a dynamic character.There is therefore a great expectation of the dynamism of the word of God in African Christian worship and in the Zairean Mass each reader receives authorisation from the presiding priest.

The recognition of the oral tradition in African cultures is also made in the Zaire Mass with the frequent use of dialogue between the celebrant and the congregation, both in the prayers of the Mass and in the homily. The preacher will address questions to the people and will even break into song, in which the people join him. So the dialogue-style of the Zaire Mass reflects the oral tradition in which there is mutual encouragement and expression of joy.

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34 Nyamtit 1985 op cit

35 op cit, 28

36 op cit 41

9. The Anglican Church in Kenya: seeking to be "authentically African"

As an example of the extraordinary liturgical renewal and rediscovery of Early Church worship patterns during this century and like other African Anglican Provinces[37], the Anglican Church in Kenya [ACK] has developed several liturgies which try to reflect and incorporate a *distinctly* African Christian identity.

The recent liturgical developments from the ACK reflect the growing theological and liturgical independence and confidence within sub-Saharan Africa from its Western origins and in a history of the development of the Anglican Church in Kenya *"Rabai to Mumias"*[38], there is a clear self-description of its approach to liturgical development in the past 25 years.

"It is not concerned with ceremonial but looks to a renewal and transformation of the church's life and spirituality. It seeks a return to the depths of our heritage in scriptural tradition and culture. Liturgical renewal should seek a style and understanding of liturgical celebration which communicates a sense of the holy - not as unapproachable and to be respected from afar- but as present in our midst. Africans must meet the glorified Lord in their worship and liturgy. This must seek to penetrate and understand as well as to use properly the new or restored symbols which reveal and acclaim the sharing presence of the risen Lord." [39]

Since the 1970's, an attempt has been made to "simplify" the liturgy, which started with translating the Book of Common Prayer into "simple and readable English" entitled *Modern English Services*.. Since then there have been translations of this prayer book into Kenyan languages but they have mostly retained the 1662 liturgical structure.

During the 1980's the Provincial Liturgical Committee had the primary task of writing liturgies that would make a completely new, distinct, prayer book for the ACK.

The draft of the first Holy Communion liturgy was prepared in 1987 and after two years of experimental use in cathedrals and theological colleges, the Provincial Synod gave its approval for the Eucharistic liturgy's revision. The first revised service was *A Kenyan Service of Holy Communion* which was first published in 1989.

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[37] cf. The Kanamai Statement (1993) in *Anglican Liturgical Inculturation in Africa*, Alcuin/GROW, 1994

[38] *From Rabai to Mumias: A Short History of the Church of the Province of Kenya 1844-1994*, 1994

[39] op cit 165

This Eucharistic liturgy reflects the theological and liturgical foundation of the ACK: the Bible and the 1662 Prayer Book and asserts that: "This is not a modern translation or even adaptation of the old, nor an importation of liturgical revision from the West, but rather a new liturgy which has grown out of recent development in African Christian Theology and liturgical research. It is both thoroughly biblical and authentically African, both faithful to Anglican tradition and refreshingly creative."[40]

In the next chapter we shall examine this Anglican liturgy in more depth to discover whether or not it incorporates our principles of inculturation that are emerging, that is, the principles of Incarnation, Mission and Dialogue.

40 *Rabai to Mumais* 1995 op cit167

CHAPTER SIX

"CROSSROADS ARE FOR MEETING"[1]: INCULTURATION IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN KENYA (ACK)[2]

1. Establishing a sound cultural base

"Culture is shared meaning. To comprehend meaning, one must see the world as others see it, to comprehend experience in terms of others' frame of reference."[3]

The social identity, cohesion and continuity of any community depends upon the strength of its cultural base which is, according to Linwood Barney's[4] 'pyramid' model of culture, its ideology and world-view. Within this base are the culture's common meanings, values, perceptions and judgments. Any erosion of this base will subsequently weaken the culture and make it vulnerable to outside pressure.

So it has been put forward that in the process of European colonisation in the past hundred years, the cultural base of many of sub-Saharan African societies has been severely eroded, which has left them prey to internal rivalry and division, individualism and an adoption of an alien, European worldview to compensate for the cracks within its own cultural base.
This had in part been reflected in the apparent whole-sale adoption of Christianity as both a religious and cultural base which until political independence had not really come under much theological scrutiny.
However, with the increasing influence of the social sciences, the decline of colonialism and imperialism in the latter part of this century, the mainstream Christian churches are now

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1 *Crossroads are for meeting* is the title of a series of essays On *The Mission and Common Life of the [Anglican] Church in a Global Society* (A Lambeth 1988 Theme Book)1986

2 Formerly known as the 'Church in the Province of Kenya'

3 James Peacock, The Anthropological Lens: Harsh Light; Soft Focus, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p99, cited by Gerald Arbuckle: *Earthing the Gospel*, 1990, 44

4 See chapter 2.

wanting to critically examine their part in creating the negative cracks within the base of sub-Saharan African culture.

This self-examination has resulted in an attempt to transcend their 'congenital and chronic Euro-American ethnocentrism'[5], which is evident from the writings of contemporary indigenous theologians, ethicists and missiologists as well as pastoral and missionary directives issued periodically by church bodies.[6]

For some contemporary Western theologians like Eugene Hillman, the process of recognising the rights of all peoples to their own indigenous ways of being human and religious has hardly begun.

"In spite of the rhetoric of incarnation, inculturation, indigenization and contextualization, the general scene is characterised by little more than little translations, cautious adaptations and questionable substitutions. Full-blooded incarnations of Christianity, if they exist anywhere in Africa, are well hidden. Instead there is in most Christian congregations an uneasy clinging to the model of missionary and pastoral ministry developed during the colonial period under the influence of a colossal western cultural arrogance."[7]

Hillman concedes that this model is now being expressed more gently although the African cultural world views are still affected by the importation of "strictly western suppositions, systems, institutions ... symbols, myths, rules, concepts, practices, customs and costumes."[8]

So Hillman urges the Christian Church to apply inculturation to the pluralistic cultures of sub-Saharan Africa thoroughly; that is ," making the gospel incarnate in different cultures [with] ...the full acceptance of people where they are in their own time and place, in everything except sin. Such is the incarnational economy through which God embraces humankind from within."[9]

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5 cf. Eugene Hillman, *Toward an African Christianity*, 1993, 10

6 For example, John Paul II, 1990, *Redemptoris Missio*, nos. 28,29 on the 'magnanimity' of the Holy Spirit; cited op cit,30

7 Hillman 1993, op cit, 10-11

8 op cit, 11

9 "From now on," according to John Paul II, " the Church opens her doors and becomes the house which all may enter, and in which all can feel at home, while keeping their own cultures and traditions, providing these are not contrary to the Gospel."
op cit, 84, citing *Redemptoris Missio*, no.24

2. Kenya: Background issues

i) Population and urbanisation:

The country's population in 1994 was estimated to be over 20 million people at a rate of 3.8% per annum[10] and within this the rural-urban migration and resulting urbanisation has grown rapidly. This has resulted in an estimated 15% of the whole population are in urban centres and 37% of this population is concentrated in Nairobi, the capital city.

"While urban areas enjoy better infrastructural and development facilities, the rapid growth of the population in these areas has reduced the speed at which the facilities can be provided thereby creating a wide gap between need and supply of essential services such as water, sewage, housing, health facilities and schools."[11]

The effect of urbanisation not only effects socio-economic standards of living but also directly influences the religious attitudes of people who are trying to maintain a cultural identity in the urban sprawl.

It is in the cities that the African Initiated Churches seem to thrive, providing a cultural and religious link with people's homeland and with a distinctly African identity in a place where modernisation and Westernisation in particular seems to have most impact and effect. It must be added that they flourish in shanty towns and squatter areas and that there is a tendency for the socially, economically 'upwardly mobile' members to join 'mainstream' churches rather than to stay.

Within this rural-based but significant urban social context the Anglican Church in Kenya is developing its liturgy.Therefore, in order to relate to the culture of its day, the ACK has to acknowledge in its language and symbolism that although Kenya is still predominantly an agricultural country with much of its income coming from the sale of coffee, tea, pyrethrum etc. 15% of the population is urban.So rural imagery is still very relevant and important to

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10 Cited by Wanjiku Kironyo "The Maji Mazuri Centre - Nairobi", a case study in Holistic Mission, *Transformation Vol 11 ,No.4* October/December 1994, 26-30

11 op cit, 26

Kenyan culture but the fact of urbanisation has also to be taken into consideration.

ii) Language

"Christ must be heard to speak to African Christians direct."[12]

If the Christain faith is one of communicating theGospel to all cultures then the issue of the use of language is paramount. In defence of the early Christian missionary movement to Africa, it was the translation of the Bible into the vernacular that enabled greater theological freedom to the growing indigenous churches as well as in educational development.

Therefore language is of paramount importance within the mission of the Christian Church and in particular in use of liturgy.

The many ethnic backgrounds and languages has meant that Kenya has taken English and Kiswahili as official languages and, as Kironyo notes, English is mainly used by the literate members of the population but over 80% of the population can communicate comfortably in Kiswahili. The literacy level is now estimated at 55% as opposed to 30% before independence. This also has implications for liturgical developments in Kenya. The ACK Service for Holy Communion was written in English and used experimentally in theological colleges and cathedrals before official approval which have been the 'testing ground' for new liturgies. This raises several issues.

Firstly, although English is one of the official Kenyan languages, it tends to be spoken and understood only by those with a secondary or higher education and since secondary state education is not a given as in Britain, the liturgy in English will not reach the maximum number of people. It would be more widespread if it was in Kiswahili.

Secondly, the testing ground for new liturgies is not in the ordinary parishes but in places where education is more likely to be assumed as well as having a greater proportion of congregation members of higher social status.There is a danger then of making experimental liturgies an elitist occupation for theologians and senior church people.

As we examine this particular liturgy in the light of theological and liturgical inculturation we

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12 Kwesi Dickson, *Theology in Africa*, 1984, 5

shall ask whether or not the service has met these words and the previous underlying aim of making liturgy in the ACK more meaningful, more intelligible and searching for simplification. In what ways does it show that it has grown out of recent African Christian Theology and liturgical research? Is it thoroughly biblical?Is it authentically African and also faithful to the Anglican tradition? Does it demonstrate the principles of inculturation, that is, Incarnation, Mission and Dialogue?

3. The Gikuyu: a case study of African Traditional Religion in Kenya

"In so far as one preaches the gospel as it has been developed within one's own culture, one is preaching not only the gospel but also one's culture. In so far as one is preaching one's own culture, one is asking others not only to accept the gospel but also to renounce their own culture and accept one's own ."[13]

The former president of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta in 1938 described this situation in his account of Gikuyu life in *Facing Mount Kenya* :

"As far as religion was concerned, the African was regarded as a clean slate on which anything could be written. He was supposed to take wholeheartedly all religious dogmas of the white man and keep them sacred and unchallenged, no matter how alien to the African mode of life....The missionaries endeavoured to rescue the depraved souls of the Africans from the 'eternal fire'; they set out to uproot the African, body and soul, from his old customs and beliefs, put him in a class by himself , with all his tribal traditions shattered and his institutions trampled upon... They [the early teachers of the Christian religion in Africa] did not take into account the difference between the individual aspects embodied in Christian religion, and the communal life of the African regulated by customs and traditions handed down from generation to generation."[14]

Kenyatta's detailed description of the cultural and tribal traditions of the Gikuyu in the 1930's provides us with insights into African traditional religion found in Kenya.

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13 Bernard Lonegan cited by Eugene Hillman 1993, op cit, 7

14 Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, (1938)1989, Heinemann, Nairobi, 269-271

Although today in the late 1990's many Gikuyu may not practice all the traditions of their forebears, Kenyatta's study provides a clear basis for the understanding of the Gikuyu culture and worldview which are still in evidence (for example, Gikuyu naming) within the Christian Church.

i) Monotheistic deity

Kenyatta asserts that with the Gikuyu there is a distinction between deity worship and communion with ancestors, that only *Ngai*, the one High God, is worshipped.
"The essential difference between Deity worship, in the true sense , and what is known as "ancestor worship", is demonstrated by the fact that the expression *gothaithaya Ngai* "translated as 'to beseech Ngai' or 'to worship Ngai ' is never used in connection with ancestral spirits. The term used for what I shall call 'communion with ancestors ' is '*goitangera ngoma njohi*' , literally, 'to pour out or to sprinkle beer for spirits.'This refers to the pouring out of a little of whatever you are drinking onto the ground for the ancestors and, in as special sense, to a larger offering of a similar nature made on the occasion of communion ceremonies, when a special quantity of beer is brewed for presentation to the ancestral spirits. At the same time a beast will be sacrificed."[15]

For the Gikuyu there is a clear distinction between the two supernatural elements. "On the one hand is the relationship with the one High God, Ngai, which may accurately be termed one of worship...We shall find, for example, that when a sacrifice is made to the High God on an occasion of national (tribal) importance, the ancestors must join in making the sacrifice."[16]

ii) Places of worship

The common name used in speaking of the Supreme Being is*Ngai.* In prayers and sacrifices Ngai is addressed by the Gikuyu as *Mwena-Nyaga*, the Possessor of Brightness. *Kere-Nyaga*, the Gikuyu name for Mount Kenya, means 'that which posses brightness', or 'mountain of brightness'. The mountain is believed by the Gikuyu to be Ngai's official resting-place (aswell

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15 Kenyatta 1938 op cit, 232
16 op cit

as 'lesser' mountains) and in their prayers they turn towards Kere-Nyaga and with their hands raised towards it, they offer their sacrifices.[17]

The Gikuyu who do not have 'temples made with hands' have sacred trees, generally Mogumo (fig) and Mokoyo trees, which symbolise their
holy mountains, under which they worship and make their sacrifices to Mwene-Nyaga. Kenyatta describes them as "one of the key institutions of their culture. It marks at once their unity as a people, their family integrity (for their fathers sacrificed around it), their close contact with the soil, the rain and the rest of Nature and, to crown all, their most vital communion with the High God of the tribe."[18]

Today many Anglican churches in Gikuyu areas have been built next to or on the old site of such sacred trees such as the one I visited in the parish of Rwambiti, the Diocese of Kirinyaga.

iii) Prayers addressed to God

Kenyatta cites an example of the kind of prayers offered up to Ngai at most public assemblies.[19] Asking for Blessing :

1. Say ye, the elders may have wisdom and speak with one voice.
2. Praise ye Ngai. Peace be with us.
1. Say ye that the country may have tranquillity and the people may continue to increase.
2. Praise ye Ngai. Peace be with us.
1. Say ye that the people and the flocks and the herds may prosper and be free from illness.
2. Praise ye Ngai. Peace be with us.
1. Say ye the fields may bear much fruit and the land may continue to be fertile.
2. Praise ye Ngai. Peace be with us.

This is a general prayer which highlights the Gikuyu understanding of God as the controller of the life and health of the people and their livestock aswell as the natural elements, especially

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17 Kenyatta 1938 op cit,234

18 op cit,250

19 op cit 238-9. The number 1 in this prayer denotes the lines spoken by the elder; number 2 indicates the responses of an assembly.

rain and the consequent productivity of the land crops. In fact all natural phenomena are attributed to Ngai to some degree. Kenyatta does not refer to this as 'nature worship' per se but as "a quality that runs through the whole [of the Gikuyu religion], vitalising it and keeping it in constant touch with daily need and emotions." [20]

Just as there is a social and religious continuum between the living and the dead, there is a religious continuum between the creator God and the natural order and everyday life. This contributes to the outsider's perspective that the African is inherently religious. This could certainly be said of the Gikuyu as Kenyatta describes them.

iv) Sacrifice

There is a Gikuyu expression Ngai ndegaigiagwo, literally meaning 'Ngai must never be pestered', which under girds the Gikuyu way of life. "In the first place it implies that even if a terrible calamity, such as the death of his child, should befall a man, his attitude must be one of resignation, for the people know that Ngai gives and has the power to take away. The man is not left hopeless, for Ngai may restore his losses-another child may be born to him."[21]

The Gikuyu turn to Ngai and offer sacrifices only in serious matters that affect the whole tribe such as drought, an epidemic outbreak or serious illness when after applied medical knowledge and communication with the ancestors has not changed the illness. Then the father of the affected family appeals to Ngai but not on his own but with the living and the dead of the family- together they approach Ngai. Kenyatta explains that this "assures Mwene-Nyaga that the occasion is serious and that the whole family is indeed at one, having exhausted all other means in pleading for his help."

The form of sacrifice usually depends on the purpose of the ceremony- whether it is for rain,purifying the crops or harvesting, or for important life-events such as initiation. The animal usually used for scarifice is an unblemished lamb.

v) Communion of ancestors

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20 Kenyatta 1938 op cit, 241

21 op cit, 238

The communion of ancestors is the acknowledged extension of the living family to the family members who have died, particularly at significant moments in the family's life. It is more like an everyday, on-going conversation with the ancestors than the rarer supplication ad prayers to Mwene-Nyaga. It is based upon the growing respect and importance given to the person as they move through different age-groups. This hierarchy of respect includes those who have died.

It is a person's seniority that makes their presence or advice almost indispensable and in religious ceremonies and in political and social gatherings, the elders hold supreme authority . Kenyatta writes that the custom of the Gikuyu demands that the elder should be given his due respect and honour, not only when he is present, but also when he is absent. The principle remains the same with the family members who are permanently absent through death.

Kenyatta gives an example of this communion with the ancestors that is almost 'run of the mill' in its ordinariness:
"If a son wrongs his father, he appeases his father's anger by giving him a sheep or a he-goat and two or three calabashes of beer; and in this way he holds a communion with his father and the ancestral spirits who are represented by the father.
On receiving these gifts the father, before partaking of the feast, sprinkles on the ground a hornful of beer to quench the thirst of the ancestral spirits and at the same time to appease them. He then blesses the son and declares that, in agreement with the ancestral spirits, he has forgiven him."[22]

In the elder 's capacity of mediator, their family group and community in general respect them for their seniority and wisdom, and they in turn respect the seniority of the ancestral spirits. The elders mediate between the rest of the people and their ancestors on the basis that their elevated social position is due to the care and guidance given to them by their departed ancestors and so whatever the elder gives the ancestors-whether it's a hornful of beer or a portion of a sheep or goat killed or the first-fruits of the harvest- he gives them, Kenyatta

22 Kenyatta 1938 op cit, 264

asserts, "not in form of a prayer, but in gratitude and to hold their memory green."[23] These gifts symbolise the gifts that the departed elders would have received had they been alive and which the living elders now receive.

Kenyatta wishes to distinguish therefore between the 'true worshipping' attitude toward the supreme God, Mweng- Nyaga and the ceremony of communing with the ancestral spirits which is more of an attitude of remembrance than worship. Indeed, the words for prayer and worship, *gothaithaya* and *goikia-mokoigoro* respectively, are never used by the Gikuyu in dealing with the ancestor's spirits but are "reserved for solemn rituals and sacrifices directed to the power of the unseen"[24]

The Gikuyu as described by Kenyatta believe that there is a spiritual continuum in which the spirits of the dead can show their pleasure or displeasure at the behaviour of an individual or group just as a living elder would and that in order to establish a good relation between the two worlds, the ceremony of communing with the ancestral spirits is observed constantly.[25] Kenyatta's description of 'communion with ancestral spirits' is more like an on-going conversation with the ancestors than an act of worship. However he leaves wide open the possibility that ancestors could be deified by individuals and the question of Christian imagery and symbolism that could step into the shoes of the Gikuyu's religious practices...

4. The Anglican Church in Kenya: A Kenyan Service of Holy Communion, 1989

i) Introduction

The service of Holy Communion that emerged from a concern for 'a liturgy that reflected the developments in African Christian Theology and liturgical research' was approved for use by the ACK Provincial Synod in 1989. Since then it has been used both in Kenya and further

23 Kenyatta 1938 op cit, 265
24 op cit, 266
25 op cit

afield.[26]

For our purposes we shall be focussing upon the distinctly African theology that emerges from this service of Holy Communion and not on the wider Eucharistic issues.

A holistic approach

Archbishop Gitari [27] has said prefers liturgy and its development to come from the grassroots. But how can they make any impact if they are not literate or have the theological understanding of clergy and students of cathedrals and theological colleges? This is where the diocesan teaching of clergy and evangelists, together with community workers in an holistic approach to mission and ministry, including liturgy, can have an effect and allow the people to determine their own liturgy.

A holistic approach which is both liturgical and pastoral under girds this eucharistic rite. This approach is exemplified in a personal account by Canon Graham Kings, then a tutor at St. Andrew's Theological College, recalls a confirmation service in Isiolo, northern Kenya in December 1985. The bishop had just confirmed 125 people among the Turkana and Sambura tribes:

"After the service the communion table became a development desk. The Bishop and Diocesan Director of Development took notes as the elders explained their further needs, which included clean water, eye treatment, cattle dips, and help with preventing elephants from ruining their crops! While this was happening, the local community health workers [who had been trained at the College] were dispensing medicine."[28] Through the partnership of evangelism and development many had come to know Christ of which the large confirmation service was evident.

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26 It seems to have captured the liturgical imagination within the wider Anglican Church, e.g.*Let all the world..: Liturgies, litanies and prayers from around the world,* United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London, 1990,pp 49-60. It was also used during the 1998 Lambeth Conference.

27 From a personal interview with the Archbishop when he was Bishop of the Diocese of Kirinyaga, July 1994

28 Revd Graham Kings, "The Bible and African Traditional Religion"., *Anvil vol 4:2*, 1987, 140

Evangelical roots

The new Service of Holy Communion also reflects the evangelical tradition of the ACK and the influence of the East African Revival[29] as does an evangelical emphasis on importance of Scripture, in particular the themes of Old Testament covenant theology, the life of Christ in the Gospels and Pauline teaching in the Epistles.[30]

The East African Revival, which began in Rwanda in 1936 with a mission by Oxbridge graduates steeped in the Keswick 'higher life' theology, was a spiritual reawakening movement not untypical of other revival movements that have occurred and are still occurring around the world.
Although it was not without its internal conflicts, the movement spread from Rwanda to Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and has continued to influence the life of the Church in Eastern Africa to the present day. Despite their strong, often passionate, criticism of the Church, they have seen themselves as called to witness to the Church from within. (For example, within most congregations of the ACK there is a group of ' Revival Brethren'.)

Being of the 'Revival Brethren'

The movement originating from conservative evangelicalism, has consistently preached the need for personal conversion and when a person gives their 'testimony' that they have 'accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour', they are received into the revival fellowship. The new 'sister/brother in the Lord' is expected to live a life of daily fellowship with the Lord and constant self-examination and repentance. They are expected to attend weekly fellowship

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29 cf. A. Hastings, *A History of African Christianity, 1950-1975*, 1979 pp 87-8, 100-103

30 Arbuckle suggests that 'Contextualisation' is the Evangelical approach to inculturation with the emphasis on the Great Commission cf. Matthew 28:18-20 and that primacy is given to the biblical Word in the Evangelical tradition and not to liturgical or sacramental life.
"Since the mid 1950's the emphasis has been on personal faith, plus baptism and nurturing in the Christian faith, with an increased awareness and sensitive knowledge of cultures, leading to the development of theological 'contextualisation'. This can be seen as a 'communication tactic' in the process of outworking the Great Commission, rather than a process of socio-political liberation."
However, in the case of the ACK, there is both a concern for the Great Commission *and* social justice cf. its nick-name from its former title Church in the Province of Kenya was "The Church of Politics of Kenya"!
Gerald Arbuckle, *Earthing the Gospel: An Inculturation Handbook for Pastoral Workers*, 1990, 23-24

meetings where they have to 'walk in light' i.e. give testimony of how one has been spiritually since the previous meeting.

The movement typically rejects many aspects of traditional culture. Deeply critical of African values and life-styles and of 'indigenization' as a church policy for its own, they have adopted a "Christ vs. culture" polemic. Yet it can be argued that this very critique of African values springs from within an African cultural perspective e.g. the clan-like qualities of the fellowship. If it was not for westernisation evident in the focus upon the individual, education and a Protestant work ethic, comparisons could be made with the 'holiness movement ' within the African Initiated Churches.

In his study of the Revival, Kevin Ward suggests that in Kenya where the Anglican church was well-established, the Revival was a way of asserting a theological equality with white people: something that had particular resonance in Kenya and which had appeal to the local educated stratum in both Anglican and Presbyterian churches.[31]

Although the Revival Movement was often anti-political and therefore conformist, its strength was demonstrated during the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya in the 1950's, when Revival Brethren within the ACK died as martyrs. They refused to swear an oath of fidelity to the nationalists which involved goats' blood or the blood of the oath taker and deny the name of Jesus. The frequent reply of the Brethren who were willing to face martyrdom was 'I have been saved by the blood of the Lamb, so how can I take the blood of goats?' The same testimony can be said of the Revival Brethren in Uganda during the time of Idi Amin.

It is perhaps not surprising to find educated, evangelical church leaders in East Africa who have a Revival background, among them Festo Kivengere and Kenyan Archbishop, David Gitari.

Seeking liturgical renewal

The book collated to celebrate 150 years of the Anglican Church in Kenya, *Rabai to Mumias: a short history of the Church of the Province of Kenya* [32] writes of the liturgical development in Kenya as part of the renewal of the Church's life and spirituality. Liturgical renewal in the

31 Kevin Ward: *Demythologising the Revival: An overview of its history and theology*; East African Revival Symposium, Cambridge:1st November 1994, Unpublished paper

32 *Rabai to Mumias: A Short History of the Church of the Province of Kenya, 1844-1994,* 1995

ACK "seeks a return to the depths of our heritage in Scripture and culture...to penetrate and understand as well as to use properly the new or restored symbols which reveal and acclaim the sharing presence of the risen Lord...Our putting the church's message into a modern African context has a purpose in the church , to create vivacity...and provide avenues of growth and renewal. In this way our communities can remain vulnerable to the Gospel, not hardened within a protective shell of religious speech."[33]

From 1662 to 1989..

The ACK has a history of remaining faithful to the strong missionary tradition, not least to the1662 Book of Common Prayer, and so this eucharistic rite is an important departure and, within the context of African Anglican eucharistic liturgy shows a "certain maturity in the development of indigenous prayer rather than the importation of liturgical revisions of the west."[34]

The beginning of liturgical developments in the ACK came with the translation of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer into Kenyan languages which maintained the 1662 liturgical structure but the Thirty Nine Articles and some services were sometimes left out.[35] Since the Book of Common Prayer was translated however, it has become "deeply embedded" in the memories of church members who now can often be the fiercest critics of liturgical innovation. A common challenge to the introduction of new liturgy into churches across the Anglican Communion!

The development of the liturgy started in the seventies with a search for 'simplification' , making it 'more meaningful' and 'intelligible' with the underlying premise that liturgy is at the 'centre of our lives'.

It was within this remit that in 1975 the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, which was regarded with the Bible as the foundation of the ACK, was translated into "simple and readable English" in the "Modern English Services". This would however have limited scope as English was the

33 *From Rabai to Mumias* 1995 op cit 165, 180

34 Comments based on the Draft service,1987: Phillip Tovey, *Inculturation: The Eucharist in Africa*, 1988, 39

35 Tovey 1988 op cit 166

second official language of Kenya and generally- speaking only those who had had secondary education would have been able to read it, let alone be able to afford to buy a copy.

In the 1980's a new liturgical committee was created out of the previous Liturgical Commission under the auspices of the Provincial Board of Theological Education whose task was to write liturgies that would make a complete new prayer book fro the ACK. The Chair of both these groups was the then Bishop, David Gitari.

In 1987 the first draft of a Holy Communion Service was submitted to the Provincial Synod. The main contributors to this liturgy were Bishop Gitari and the Revd. Graham Kings, then Vice-Principal at St. Andrew's Theological and Development College, Kabare with assistance from the students of the College .
Over the next two years the service was used as an experiment at cathedrals and colleges and was given approval by the Provincial Synod in its revised form in 1989 and then published.

The preface to this service makes clear that the ACK was founded on two books: the Bible and the 1662 Prayer Book and that the Service is "not a modern translation over even adaptation of the old, nor an importation of liturgical revision from the West, but rather a new liturgy which has grown out of recent development in African Christian Theology and liturgical research. It is both thoroughly biblical and authentically African, both faithful to Anglican tradition and refreshingly creative."[36]

Since 1990 there have been publications of other liturgies under the title "Modern Services"[37] including Morning and Evening Prayer, Baptism, a draft Admission to Holy Communion and a draft Confirmation and Commissioning.
All these services are based on the Book of Common Prayer except the service of Admission to Holy Communion which permits "believing children to partake communion before they are mature enough for the studies that lead to confirmation... this service [then] throws new light

36 Preface to *A Service of Holy Communion* , 1989
37 *Modern Services*, 1991

on commitment and dedication at the time of confirmation."[38]

Celebrating life in Christ

The search for intelligible, simple and meaningful liturgy has also had a pastoral purpose: "the Church's liturgy must seek to develop a kind of pastoral care which will help the ACK Christian communities to become conscious of the presence of Christianity in their lives so that when they gather for liturgy, they can truly celebrate not simply life, but life in Christ."[39]

The theology behind this revision is that liturgy has a *pastoral purpose* and not simply a pastoral response to people's needs. It is in affirming and celebrating the identity we have in Christ that enables us to proclaim the Gospel and live it out.
How can the Church's liturgy enable a Christian to become more Christ-like if it isn't to bring them into the renewing and refreshing presence of God, to know and proclaim God's provision and promises in the words of the Psalms, the Scriptures, prayers and petitions; to celebrate God's faithfulness in the life, death and resurrection of Christ and to allow the Holy Spirit to change them to be more like Christ?
If the Church's liturgy of whatever denomination and in whatever country does not ultimately enable its Christian people to become more Christ-like then it has has not met its purpose.
There is also an ecumenical purpose behind these liturgical revisions.
"Of special significance for the future is the growing tendency to search for liturgical expressions which will transcend and draw together the different Christian traditions...[seeking to make Anglican worship] authentic and shared."[40]

Truly African, truly Christian...

With its historical and liturgical roots in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, the structure of A

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38 *From Rabai to Mumias* op cit, 168
This particular service raises its own theological issues but suffice to say that it is a liturgical response to a pastoral and ministerial issue of the large numbers of children who come to a living faith but who are too young to understand fully the implications of Confirmation.
39 op cit 168 cf on Worship and Pastoral Care: Robin Green *Only Connect;* William H. Willimon *Worship as Pastoral Care*, 1979
40 op cit168, italics mine

Kenyan Service of Holy Communion follows a familiar pattern. While it remains distinctly Anglican in this respect, there are within it considerable differences which reveal its distinctly African background.

The development of the new liturgies in Kenya, in particular the service of Holy Communion has been received warmly by the Anglican Church worldwide since it was published in 1989. Its main spokesperson has been Archbishop David Gitari particularly when he was Bishop of the Kirinyaga Diocese has also been instrumental in developing further liturgies as Chair of both the Provincial Board of Theological Education and the Liturgical Commission under whose guidance the liturgies have been written.

Since then it has been published in the USPG collection of worldwide litanies and liturgies[41] and was used for the opening Eucharist of the 1998 Lambeth Conference.[42]

5. A Kenyan Service of Holy Communion: The basic structure

Preparation

Greeting/ Opening Dialogue

Sentence from Scripture

Four responsorial sentences

Collect for Purity

The Ten Commandments or The New Testament Interpretation of the Law or The Summary of the Law

Gloria

Kyries (Lent only)

The Prayer for the Day (Collect of the Day)

The Ministry of the Word

Old Testament (and New Testament) reading (s)

The Gospel

Sermon

Creed

Intercessions

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41 *Let all the world...*United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG), Partnership House, London, 1990, 49-60

42 Lambeth Conference Newspaper Summer 1998

Prayers of Penitence/ Confession

Absolution

Prayer of Humble Access

The Ministry of the Sacrament

The Peace

Preparation of the Gifts

The Eucharistic Prayer — Opening Dialogue

Sursum Corda

Preface

Sanctus & Benedictus

Invocation

Institution Narrative

Acclamations

The Communion

Lord's Prayer

Acclamations

Invitation & Distribution

After Communion Prayer

Blessing

Dismissal

6. A Commentary:

Preparation

1. At the entry of the ministers the people stand and a hymn may be sung

2. Greeting/ Opening Dialogue, followed by a sentence from Scripture:

Psalm 78:24; Isaiah 30:29; Isaiah 55:2; John 6:35; I Corinthians 5:8; 1 Corinthians 10:3-4. This selection of sentences emphasise themes of the supernatural, heavenly provision of God, akin to the particularly African awareness of the intimate relationship between them, the

provision of the earth and God.

Christmas: Matthew 1:21; Easter: Luke 24:30; Pentecost: 1 Corinthians 12:13

3. Four responsorial sentences

These sentences again are based upon Scripture, if not Scriptural:

i) Psalm 24:1 cf. 1 Corinthians 10:26

Minister: The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it:

People: Let the heavens rejoice and be glad.

ii) Psalm 124:8

M: Our help is in the name of the Lord:

P: Who made heaven and earth.

iii) Psalm 122:1

M: I was glad when they said to me:

P: "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

iv) cf. Psalm 113, Ps 135:1

M: Praise the name of the Lord:

P: The name of the Lord be praised.

In addition to these sentences are further seasonal acclamations for Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

4. Collect for Purity

The people kneel for this collect and remain kneeling for the Commandments.

The new collect which has the themes of light and darkness cf. John 8:12; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 1:7."This is based on the East African Revival concept of 'walking in the light' with someone i.e. being honest even when it hurts."[43]

Almighty God,
you bring to light
things hidden in darkness,
and know the shadows of our hearts:

[43] David Gitari: Comments on "A Kenyan Service of Holy Communion" Source: Canon Graham Kings, Henry Martin Institute, Cambridge

cleanse and renew us by your Spirit,
that we may walk in the light
and glorify your name,
through Jesus Christ,
the Light of the world.
There is a choice of this collect or the modern translation of the 1662 Prayer Book collect cf. Gregory of Canterbury, c.780 and Psalm 144.

5. The Commandments

The importance placed upon the commandments as a rule of Christian living is indicated by the choice of format of them:

i) The Decalogue in modern English, with the response:
"Amen. Lord have mercy and give us grace to keep this law "with an emphasis moving from the individuals' response to God's provision and response to us with grace. However,the last commandment's response is as per Prayer Book:
Amen. Lord have mercy and write these laws in our hearts in our hearts we pray.

ii) The "New Testament Interpretation of the Law"
The biblical hermeneutic is primarily pastoral:
Exodus 20:3/ Mark 12:30
Exodus 20:4/John 4:24
Exodus 20:7/an 'amalgamation' of Scripture
Exodus 20:8/ Colossians 3:2
Exodus 20:12/1 Timothy 5:8
Exodus 20:13/Matthew 5:22
Exodus 14/ Matthew 5:28
Exodus 20:15/ Ephesians 4:28
Exodus 20:16/ an amalgamation of Scripture
Exodus 20:17 Acts 20:35, Romans 13:10

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44 cf.*The Alternative Service Book,* (*ASB*) 1980,119. For more comment , see *A Companion to the Alternative Service Book,* 1986. 181

iii) The Summary of the Law

cf. Augustine and Mark 12:29-31[45]

6. Gloria

The people stand and with the new Gloria there is the accompaniment of regular, rhythmical clapping;

Minister:	Glory to the Father
People:	Glory to the Son
M	Glory to the Spirit
P:	For ever Three in One
M:	Be glorified at home
P:	Be glorified in church
M:	Be glorified in Kenya
P:	Be glorified in Africa
M:	Be glorified on earth
P:	Be glorified in heaven
M:	Glory to the Father
P:	Glory to the Son
M	Glory to the Spirit
P:	For ever Three in One
M:	Hallelujah
P:	Amen

The co-author David Gitari writes:"Gloria starts at home and ends in heaven. The regular three beat clap is often used in political and fund-raising (harambees) events to praise the local politicians: here it is redirected to the Holy Trinity! The clap is on the syllables Glo...to...Fath...and glor...fied...home etc. Rather complicated, unless one is used to it (especially when holding a book), but the Gloria work without the clapping. This Gloria was written for the liturgy of the consecration of Embu Cathedral."[46]

The alternative is the modern translation of the traditional Gloria, the fourth century hymn of

45 *Companion to the ASB*, 1980, 185-7

46 op cit, 1.

unknown authorship.

7. Kyries to replace the Gloria for Lent only

8. "The Prayer for the Day" (Collect of the Day)

The Ministry of the Word

9. Old Testament reading

"Either two or three passages from Scripture are read, the last of which is always the Gospel. After the readings :This is the word of the Lord: Hallelujah. Praise be to God."

The use of word of praise, Hallelujah, reflects its wide usage in Kenya, the Christian Church having been influenced by the East African Revival .

10. New Testament reading

11. The Gospel

Introduction to the Gospel:

"We stand to hear the good news of our salvation, as it is written in the Gospel according to Saint..., chapter...beginning to read at verse..."

After the Gospel: "This is the Gospel of Christ. Hallelujah. Praise to Christ our Saviour."

12. Sermon

13. The Nicene Creed

Introduced with the words:

"We stand together with Christians throughout the centuries, and throughout the world today, to affirm our faith in the words of the Nicene Creed."This stresses universality.

Note also the invisible inclusiveness of "For us and for our salvation".

14. Intercessions[47]

The rubrics state: "Instead of, or in addition to, the following litany of intercession, other words may be used, prayerful songs may be sung between intercessions, or people may be encouraged to join in open prayer. The leading of the intercessions may be shared among the people."

i) The litany

L: May the bishops and leaders of our churches have wisdom and speak with one voice.
P: Amen. Lord have mercy.
L: May the leaders of our country rule with righteousness
P: Amen. Lord have mercy.
L: May justice be our shield and defender.
P: Amen. Lord have mercy.
L: May the country have peace and the people be blessed.
P: Amen. Lord have mercy.
L: May the flocks and the herds prosper and the fish abound in our lakes.
P: Amen. Lord have mercy.
L: May the fields be fertile and the harvest plentiful.
P: Amen. Lord have mercy.
L: May we and our enemies turn towards peace.
P: Amen. Lord have mercy.
L: May the love of the Father touch the lonely, the bereaved and the suffering.
P: Amen. Lord have mercy.
L: May the path of the world be swept of all dangers
P: Hallelujah. The Lord of Mercy is with us.

The line "May justice be our shield and defender" is part of the Kenyan National Anthem. 'Fish' have been added to the original Gikuyu prayer on which this litany is based since fish

are an important food source and income in western Kenya.

ii) Prayers of Intercession

i) Prayer for the Church,...including "pastors, church workers...working together for the extension of your kingdom in and beyond our land"

In the ACK a holistic approach to the mission and ministry of the church is actively pursued and lay church workers/evangelists play an important part both in teaching Christian discipleship and health and agricultural education.

ii) Prayer for the State cf Amos 5:24

"The prayer for the nation echoes the Presidential slogan of "Nyayo" (footsteps) which is defined as following the footsteps of 'Peace, Love and Unity', but adds the important theme of justice from Amos 5."[48]

iii) Prayer for the needs of the world. cf. Luke 2:52, Matthew 6:10

The prayer links the model of Jesus' growth with the needs of the world.

Luke 2:52 "has been a key verse in mission and development strategy in the diocese [of Kirinyaga]. Every child born in the diocese should have a chance of developing as the child Jesus did in mind, body, spirit and society"

Jesus grew in wisdom -educational involvement

stature - community health work

favour with God - evangelism

and with man - social justice."[49]

The theme of social justice continues with reference to those "who are under oppression and exploitation". The 'revival' phraseology is found here "...in inspiring us to share your gospel, so that friends and strangers may be saved."[50]

iv) Thanksgiving prayer for the lives of the departed in Christ, with an echo of Hebrew

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48 Gitari *Commentary*, op cit, 2

49 op cit, 2

50 Emphasis mine.

12:1 and 'Nyayo, but following in the footsteps of the saints.

Let us thank God for the lives of those who have departed in Christ.
Gracious Father, we heartily thank you
for our faithful ancestors
and all who have passed through death
into the new life of joy in our heavenly home.
We pray that, surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses[51] ,
we may walk in their footsteps
and be fully united with them
in your everlasting kingdom.
Grant the prayers of your family, Father:
Through Jesus Christ, our mediator.

15. Prayers of Penitence

i) Comfortable Words: cf. Luke 9:23-4; Matthew 11:28

ii) Confession:

Almighty God, Creator of all,
you marvellously made us in your image;
but we have corrupted ourselves
and damaged your likeness
by rejecting your love
and hurting our neighbours.
We have done wrong and neglected to do right
We are sincerely sorry
and heartily repent of our sins.
Cleanse us and forgive us
by the sacrifice of your Son;
Remake us and lead us
by your Spirit the, Comforter.
We ask this through Jesus Christ

[51]cf. Hebrews 12:1 The spiritual continuum between the living and the dead celebrated in African societies is acknowledged here as well as the African Christology of Christ as Mediator.

our Lord. Amen.

16. Absolution cf. Psalm 105:11-12

Almighty God,
whose steadfast love is as great
as the heavens are high above the earth,
remove your sins from you,
as far as the east is from the west,
strengthen your life in his kingdom
and keep you upright to the last day;
through Jesus Christ our merciful High Priest. Amen.

17. Prayer of Humble Access cf. Matthew 5:6 and 1 John 2:1

Thank you, Father, for forgiveness
We come to your table as your children
not presuming but assured,
not trusting ourselves but your Word;
we hunger and thirst for righteousness,
and ask for our hearts to be satisfied
with the body and blood of your Son,
Jesus Christ the Righteous.
Amen.

The Ministry of the Sacrament

18. The Sharing of the Peace

The rubric specifies a handshake, or other appropriate gesture. [People remain standing until the Lord's Prayer.]

19. Preparation of the Gifts

"All things come from you O Lord: And of your own have we given you"

20. The Eucharistic Prayer

i) Opening Dialogue:

M. Is the Father with us?

P. He is.

M. Is Christ among us?

P. He is.

M. Is the Spirit here?

P. He is.

M. This is our God

P: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

M. We are his people.

P. We are redeemed.

This dialogue reflects a clear Trinitarian theology with the corporate sense of community, together with a typically lively African rhythm.[52]

ii) Sursum Corda

iii) Preface

"It is right and our delight to give you thanks and praise,
great Father, living God, supreme over the world,
Creator, Provider, Saviour and Giver.
From a wandering nomad you created your family;
for a burdened people you raised up a leader;
for a confused nation you chose a king;
for a rebellious crowd you sent your prophets.
In these last days, you have sent us your Son,

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52 cp. The similar rhythm in "The All Africa Eucharistic Prayer":
Priest: We thank you for giving us life.
All: We thank you.
Priest: We thank you for giving us freedom.
All: We thank you.
cf A. Shorter, *African Culture and the Christian Church* 1974, cited by Uzukwu, op cit, 109

your perfect image, bringing your kingdom,
revealing your will,
dying, rising, reigning,
remaking your people for yourself.
Through him,
you have poured out your Holy Spirit,
filling us with light and life.

This prayer combines Trinitarian theology and covenant theology, with African and biblical names for God. It encompasses our salvation history, including the Old Testament, with echoes of present-day nomadic Kenyan life.[53]

iv) Sanctus

Preface to the Sanctus are the words:
"Therefore with angels, archangels, faithful ancestors and all in heaven..".
Gitari notes that "Not *all* ancestors are implied but those who were faithful to the...arrival of the Gospel as well as early converts"[54] Gitari makes a theological point here that salvation does not come through pre-Christian religion but only through the response to the Gospel as brought by the missionaries.
[The Benedictus is omitted]

v) Invocation

vi) Institution Narrative

M: "..."Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; Do this in remembrance of me"

P: Amen. His body was broken for us.

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53 cf."You, the Great Elder, who dwells on the shining mountain, your blessing allows our homesteads to spread. Your anger destroys them. We beseech you, and in this we are in harmony with the spirits of our ancestors; we ask you to send the Spirit of Life to bless and sanctify our offerings, that they may become the Body and Blood of Jesus, our brother and your Son."
Part of 'a Kikuyu Eucharistic Prayer 'produced by the Roman Catholic Church in Kenya which explicitly accepts Ngai as YHWH, our Brother Jesus Christ and the communion of ancestors cf. S . Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity*, Heinemann, Nairobi, 1982, 110, cited by Graham Kings, "Facing Mount Kenya: The Bible and African Traditional Religion", *Anvil vol 4:2*, 1987,130-1

54 David Gitari, "An offering from Africa to Anglicanism", *Church Times*, 6th April 1990

vii) Acclamations

There are two:

P: Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.

M: We are brothers and sisters through his blood.

P: We have died together,
we will rise together,
we will live together.

"We have died together..."is deliberately ambiguous i.e.with Christ (Romans 6) and also corporately with each other."[55]

M: Therefore, heavenly Father,
hear us as we celebrate
this covenant with joy ,
and await the coming of our
Brother, Jesus Christ.
He died in our place,
making a full atonement
for the sins of the whole world,
the perfect sacrifice, once and for all.
You accepted his offering
by raising him from death,
and granting him great honour
at your right hand on high.

P: Amen. Jesus is Lord.

M: This is the feast of victory.

P: The Lamb who was slain has
begun his reign. Hallelujah.

55 Gitari, Commentary, op cit, 2

Gitari comments on the "...coming of our Brother Jesus Christ". The Christological concept of Jesus as our 'Elder Brother' has been much developed recently in African Christian Theology e.g. Kwame Bediako. Jesus is some one to look up to and follow cf. Matthew 25:40; John 20:17; Romans 8:17 Hebrews 2:11,17."[56]

The last acclamations "..feast...Lamb" echo primarily the Christological/ atonement understanding of the Old Testament sacrificial system (cf. Hebrews 9:6-10:18) which is a key-stone in the Revival movement and also familiar to the sacrificial language of African traditional religions.

The Communion

21. Lord's Prayer
22. Acclamations:

M: Christ is alive for ever.
P: We are because he is.
M: We are one body.
P: We share one bread.
(No rubrics for the fraction)

Gitari notes that in the first draft this was based on African theologian John Mbiti's thought, 'I am because we are and since we are therefore I am' and extended to refer to Christ's risen life :

M: I am because we are.
P: We are because He is.

However at a liturgical conference, this wording was regarded as 'too esoteric' for congregations and changed.[57]

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56 op cit, 3
57 Gitari's *Commentary*, op cit, 3

23 Invitation:

M: Draw near with faith.

P: Christ is the host and we are his guests.

There is a pun on"Christ is the host..."!

A pun with confused theology?

Are we joining the Last Supper or are we taking Christ's actual body and blood or is it symbolic?

The presiding minister and his assistants receive the bread and wine. Then he holds the bread and one of his assistants holds the wine and , using a modern translation of the 1662 Prayer Book words of distribution, they declare to the people:

Minister: The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for you...

Assistant: The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you...

24. Distribution

25. After Communion Prayer

The people stand and there is a choice of three prayers:

i) Almighty God, eternal Father,
we have sat at your feet,
learnt from your word,
and eaten from your table.
We give you thanks and praise
for accepting us into your family.
Send us out with your blessing,
to live and to witness for you
in the power of your Spirit,
through Jesus Christ ,
the First Born from the dead.
Amen.

Gitari: "This Post Communion Prayer has the image of children outside an elder's hut with echoes of Acts 22:3 and Colossians 1:18."[58]

ii) God Most High,
We thank you for welcoming us,
teaching us, and feeding us.
We deserve nothing from you
but in your great mercy,
you have given us everything
in your Son Jesus Christ.
We love you and give ourselves to you
to be sent out for your work;
grant us your blessing, now and for ever.
Amen.

Gitari: 'God Most High' is a typical name for God. Romans 15:7 and Ephesians 1:3 are echoed in this prayer.[59]

iii) O God of our ancestors,
God of our people,
Before whose face the human generations
pass away;
We thank you that in you we are kept
safe for ever,
and that the broken fragments of our
history are gathered up in the redeeming
act of your dear Son,
remembered in this holy sacrament of bread and wine.
Help is to walk daily
in the Communion of Saints,
declaring our faith in the forgiveness of sins

58 Gitari, *Church Times*, op cit.
59 Gitari's Commentary, op cit, 3

and the resurrection of the body.
Now send us out in the power
of your Holy Spirit
to live and work
for your praise and glory.
Amen.

"The third prayer was written by Revd. John Nyesi, a brilliant theologian who sadly died in 1988. At the liturgical conference someone who saw it without knowing who wrote it commented "this is the prayer of a dying man." [60]

This prayer certainly has a resonance quite different from the others.

26. Blessing

Either the modern translation of the 1662 Prayer Book version or a new blessing with the following rubric: "The people accompany their first three responses with a sweep of the arm towards the cross behind the Holy Table, and their final response with a sweep towards heaven" [i.e. upwards!]

Gitari: "The blessing is based on an ancient litany of the Turkana tribe. Traditionally, with dramatic sweeping of their arms, they sent all their problems, difficulties and the devil's works to their enemies, the Maasai or Karamajong. This curse has now been Christianised, but the congregation still accompany it first with a sweep of their arms to the cross behind the holy table and then with the raising of their hands towards heaven...The first draft of this rite had "all our problems.." being set to the setting sun and all our hopes being set on the "risen Son", leading into the ASB Advent blessing "Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you...". However at a liturgical conference, the Christians in Western Kenya complained "no wonder we're having problems!" So we had to look again at the New Testament for help in redrafting and found Galatians 3:13."[61]

Blessing:

M: All our problems

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60 op cit

61 Gitari *Church Times* April 1990 , op cit

P: We send to the cross of Christ

M: All our difficulties

P: We send to the cross of Christ

M: All the devil's works

P: We send to the cross of Christ

M: All our hopes

P: We set on the risen Christ

M: Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God almighty...

P: Amen.

27. Dismissal

7. A Critique of A Kenyan Service of Holy Communion

In Cranmer's 1662 Book of Common Prayer, the 34th Article gives explicit permission for liturgical diversity in the Anglican Church:
"It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly alike; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word...every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying."

It is only in the latter part of the twentieth century that the Anglican Communion has taken this article seriously to the extent of creating new liturgies in various parts of the world, Kenya included.[62]

In May 1981, the Kenyan Provincial Board of Theological Education consultation in Mombasa,

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62 New Prayer Books within the Anglican Communion:
ECUSA1979; Ireland 1984; Canada 1985; New Zealand 1989; South Africa 1989; Australia 1995
Individual services: Episcopal Church , Scotland 1982/89; Wales 1992/94 [Kenya 1989/91]
From "The Anglican Way of Worship", Michael Vasey ,ch.6, in *Celebrating the Anglican Way* 1996, 95

stated that:

"Many churches of the Anglican Communion have started experimenting with alternative liturgies, a movement which has been made necessary by the changing circumstances. We note that the liturgy of the Church to God's people in their expression of worship. Liturgy therefore should encourage genuine spontaneous worship."[63]

Its prime recommendation was to establish a Provincial Liturgical Committee which would "prepare alternate liturgies which reflect our rich cultural heritage"[64] .This work resulted in 'A Kenyan Service of Holy Communion'.

Although the structure of this eucharistic rite remains familiar following closely to the pattern of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer brought by the first Anglican missionaries to Kenya, there are as we have seen, key liturgical changes that reflect the development of African Christian theology.

i) Evangelical

Firstly one has to comment on the evangelical Protestant nature of the Anglican Church in Kenya which is clearly reflected in this eucharistic rite, especially in its explicit use of Scripture and the language of personal conversion. The latter reflects the influence of the East African Revival and its language of 'being saved', testimony and 'walking in the light'.

There are no rubrics for the use of incense, the procession of the Gospel and there is a significant emphasis on the pastoral teaching within the Decalogue. The celebrant is referred throughout as the 'minister' rather than priest.

ii) Pastoral

Secondly the pastoral aspect of worship, that is both celebrating and *enabling* life in Christ through the Holy Spirit, is consciously sought after within this rite as part of the ACK's liturgical renewal...

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63 Consultation Recommendations in the "Partners in Mission" Paper, Mombasa 15-20 November 1981, Provincial Board of Theological Education. Source: St.Andrew's Theological and Development College, Kabare, Kenya

64 op cit

"Beyond the church door, the church's liturgy must seek to develop a kind of pastoral care which will help the CPK Christian communities to become conscious of the presence of Christianity in their lives so that when they gather for liturgy they can truly celebrate, not simply life but life in Christ. African life is full of celebrations. Above all, this should seek to make a particular kind of community known as the local church, not only because people happen to be together in pews or under a tree for an hour on Sunday morning. *Liturgical renewal endeavours to make Christian communities more caring than ever before.*"[65]

iii) Corporate prayer

cf. The Litany.

The following is the original and found in Kenyatta's study of the Gikuyu[66]

The importance of corporate prayer within African societies cannot be emphasised.

"Most of the African prayers are officially recited by priests, diviners, medicine people, kings, ritual and family elders and heads of family or other social groups' leaders. Consequently, such prayers are said on behalf of the group or community concerned, or on behalf of the individuals belonging to the group. In general, few prayers are said by individuals for their personal or private needs. As a rule, the African prayers are communitarian."[67]

The format of this communal prayer is very often a leader's prayer and the people's response. This is seen in Kenya."Some of the prayers among the Gikuyu and Meru tribes are set in a responsive form which emphasises the group or community participation and shows also that the concerns expressed in the prayer are community concerns. The leader may intone the prayer while the assembled group responds in song or recitation, generally repeating some of the phrases uttered by the leader, or well-known formula."

iv) Blood covenant

"We are brothers and sisters through his blood...

we celebrate this covenant with joy and await the coming of our Brother, Jesus Christ..."

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65 *From Rabai to Mumias*, 1995 168 [italics mine]

66 Kenyatta, op cit, 130

67 Fr.James Kihara, *Ngai , We Belong to You: Kenya's Kikuyu and Meru Prayer*, Spearhead No.89, December 1985, 11

During the development of this eucharistic rite there was considerable debate about a 'blood brotherhood' understanding of the Christian community and its support in the New Testament. Kwame Bediako insists on "...the Incarnation of the Saviour of all people, of all nations, and of all times.. that our true human identity as men and women made in the image of God is not to be understood primarily in terms of racial, cultural, national or lineage categories, but in Jesus Christ himself [cf. Romans 4:11-12] ...by becoming one like us, has shared our human heritage...Our saviour is our Elder Brother who has shared in our *African* experience in every respect, except in our sin and alienation from God...

Being our true Elder Brother now in the presence of God his Father and our Father, he displaces the mediatorial function of our natural 'spirit-fathers'. For these themselves need saving, since they originated from among us."[68]

Nyamiti takes this christology further by applying five essential elements contained in the African conception of ancestor: "...Through our grace of filiation, we enjoy common divine son ship with Him as our elder Brother (***kinship***). It is through Christ that the Father is our Ancestor...As God-man He [Christ] is supremely holy (*sacredness*), our unique Mediator (*mediation*), and the perfect Model of our Christian life *(exemplarity*). Being our God and Redeemer He is entitled to our perpetual attachment to Him through prayer and ritual ...entitled to our regular sacred communication. Accordingly, Christ is both our Brother and Ancestor; or- more shortly - He is our Brother-Ancestor."[69]

Certainly it is 'covenant' language and since we are living under the new covenant with God made in Christ and celebrated in the Lord's Supper[70] I see no direct conflict of theology.

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68 " It is known from African missionary history that sometimes one of the first actions of new converts was to pray for their ancestors who has passed on before the gospel was proclaimed...Furthermore, the resurrection and ascension of our Lord means that "he has now returned to the realm of spirit and therefore power....He is supreme over all 'gods" and authorities in the realm of the spirits. So he sums up in himself all their powers and cancels any terrorising influence that might be assumed to have upon us." Kwame Bediako, "Jesus in African Culture", Source not known, 60, 62,63

69 Charles Nyamiti, "Eucharist as an Ancestral Encounter"1985, 33

70 cf Luke 22:20; Galatians 4:21-28; Hebrews 8:6-end

v) Eucharist as African celebration in community

"We have died together
We will rise together
We will live together.."

Celebrations in Africa are always marked by the active participation of the whole, celebrating community. When the reasons for the convocation are enacted out in assembly, the celebration becomes a tensive symbol- an environment for the creation and realisation of life.
Uzukwu writes: "It may be interesting for non-African observers or Euro-Africans to note how the festival (celebration) characterises not only joyful events such as marriage, solemn outings of chiefs, initiation rites and so on, but also ceremonies such as reconciliations, funerals...This emphasis on festival is possible in ...funeral ceremonies because the individual is involved in the action, i.e. the dead are being reintegrated into the community. Celebration, as such, becomes a "living out" of the triumph of life over death and of other negative forces."[71]

It is thus the depth of the African memory -the experience of life as victorious-that has dictated the pattern of the eucharistic celebration as a joyful festival in Africa."[72]
So the integration of the gestures of African celebration: rhythm, singing, dancing , clapping, within an African eucharistic rite, is highly appropriate since the Christian worshipper is celebrating the ultimate victory of life over death in the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist![73]

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71 Elochukwu E. Uzukwu:"Inculturation and the Liturgy (Eucharist)", *Paths of African Theology*, 1994 98, 99,100

72 Uzukwu op cit, 100

73 In Africa bodily gestures express both joy and how the self is experienced..."The body is thus not the beast of burden to be chastised, nor a prison for the soul, nor the machine for the thinking subject; rather it constitutes the centre for the total manifestation of the person in gestures. The body is thus the primal symbol with which the African eucharist expresses the experience of the Christ."
Uzukwu 1994 op cit, 102

CHAPTER SEVEN

'I WORSHIP THEREFORE I AM': THE THEOLOGICAL AND LITURGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF INCULTURATION

"For Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race by country or language or customs. They do not live in cities of their own; they do not use a peculiar form of speech; they do not follow an eccentric form of life...Yet although they live in Greek and barbarian cities alike, as each man's lot has been cast, and follow the customs of the country in clothing and food and other matters of daily living, at the same time they give proof of the remarkable and admittedly extraordinary constitution of their own commonwealth."[1]

In this letter to Diognetus c.AD 200 expressing the paradox of Christians being 'in the world, but not of it' we see that the incarnational way of reinterpreting, reconceptualising and transforming the meanings of pre-Christian religious symbols, myths and rituals, discussed nowadays under the heading of inculturation, is not a modern invention; it is a discovery of what has been going on from the very beginning of the Christian movement, and before that in the history of Judaism.

However, within the areas of world mission, world theology and liturgy there have been, as we have seen, various stimuli leading to a definite, self-conscious awareness of the process we call inculturation in the past twenty years and which, I suspect, will intensify in the post-modernist future.

The history of the Christian Church is a history of inculturation.

The modern appreciation of inculturation has come out of a fresh awareness of the Church as the Body of Christ, in particularly within the Roman Catholic Church following Vatican II and seems to concern itself with issues of identity, relationship and response. That is:

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[1] Diognetus 5:1-2-4-5 cited by E. Hillman, 1993 op cit

- the Christian and cultural identities of the Church if they are regarded as separate
- the relationship to Christ from which *Christian* identity comes;
- the relationship between the Christian and their community and with any other influence, such as a missionary community
- the response to God in Christ
- the response the Christian community within koinonia
- the response to the world as part of the Great Commission in Matthew 24.

To take the process of inculturation into liturgy is to face these issues of identity, relationship and response within the context of worship which I would argue also has its ultimate concern within mission.

Christian worship is mission in that it not only expresses human adoration of God in Christ the 'vertical' dimension of worship, or 'upwards and outward' as Underhill puts it but also uses expressions of adoration within liturgy that communicate to the rest of the community or local culture the Christian understanding of God, the 'horizontal' dimension of worship. It is particularly at this point that worship becomes part of the Great Commission.

In this chapter we will collate the findings from the modern and contemporary Western and sub-Saharan African theologians and liturgists and from the liturgical developments in the Church in the Province of Anglican Church in Kenya. From this we shall test the emerging themes of identity, relationship and response whether or not they they can bring us to some *principles of inculturation* that could be applied within the Anglican setting.

1. Inculturation and Theology

Inculturation is, as we have seen repeatedly, an issue of relating Christ to a particular culture (s) and it is here where **Niebuhr's typology** (see Chapter 2) can be used to critique inculturation:

i) The 'Christ against culture' type in which the culture is regarded as inherently evil from which Christians should isolate themselves means participation only with the law of Christ and

non-participation in state, church and economic affairs. Inculturation in contrast takes the culture seriously, albeit from the framework of the law of Christ. It is an inclusive not an isolationist process.

ii) The 'Christ of culture' type takes another extreme by saying that there is *no* tension between Christ and the church, state and economy, that it is all of the essence, creating, for Niebuhr, an understanding of Christ who becomes a chameleon depending on the particular culture. Niebuhr is critical of this type's over-accomodation of culture and over-dependence on reason and knowledge at the expense of revealed truth.[2]
Inculturation is inclusive but would claim the differential that Christ is both historical and immanent and that there is exclusivity in the sense that not *all* parts of a culture are to be inculturated into the life of the Church which are seen as contrary to the Gospel.

iii) The 'Christ above culture' type affirms both Christ and culture, that to deny human nature and culture in order to obey Christ is to deny the commandments to love, of which the social institutions, particularly the Church, are instruments. Niebuhr argues that this type is prone to having a high ecclesiology with the danger of institutionalising Christ and the Gospel.

Inculturation would affirm this type in that it confesses a Lord both of heaven and earth, that Christ can be encountered through specifically cultural milieu. However it would be very wary of institutionalisation since inculturation is itself a theological reaction to the excess of both church and imperial state institutionalisation which has historically hindered the indigenous cultural expression of worship and understanding of God.

iv) The 'Christ and Culture in Paradox' type is close to 'Christ above culture' in that it is a 'both-and' type. The paradox is that God is revealed through Christ *yet* remains hidden; that we are both sinner *and* righteous, under law *and* grace.
Culture is seen as transitory and institutions are seen as restraining wickedness in the world and not the embodiment of it.

Inculturation would affirm the theological paradox and the transitory nature of culture as well as

2 H. R. Niebuhr 1952 op cit, 122

the creative action in response to God's love. Niebuhr suggests that within the freedom of its paradox this type has the danger of antinomianism and this is a danger also for inculturation so it is important to have a theological and cultural framework of acceptance/orthodoxy within which the freedom can be expressed and in which the essential Gospel is not compromised.

v) The last, 'Christ the Transformer of Culture' type, says that culture is all corrupted order rather than order for corruption and its focus is on the possibilities in the present rather than a developed eschatology. Jenkins' critique of this type is that it can lead to cultural conservatism and theocracy, leading to a repressive or 'soft-centred' culture-Christianity unless there is a prophetic challenge together with radical eschatology.

Inculturation acknowledges the corruption of culture-it certainly does not put culture on a 'pedestal'- and certainly tries to deal with the present in its use of current and also longstanding cultural traditions. However, in my view it brings both prophetic challenge in its incarnational basis and a radical eschatology in its implications for human liberation, both physical and spiritual, both present and future.

So are we able to apply any particular type within Niebuhr's classic typology to the process called inculturation?
Although inculturation as a theological process is close to the second type,'Christ of Culture' in its willingness to embrace cultural values and traditions within the Gospel values of the kingdom, as we have observed inculturation is nearest to the last two types i.e.'Christ and Culture in Paradox' and 'Christ the Transformer of Culture' in its embracing of culture and the need for on-going dialogue with culture to achieve authentic inculturation (as opposed to assumed or superficial inculturation).

Niebuhr's typology therefore can clarify the remit of inculturation although its application as we have seen is complex and fluid, between types four and five.

2. Theology: "Landing on empty ground..?"

John Mbiti wrote that "Christianity..did not land on empty ground. They [Christian missionaries] found African peoples deeply immersed in their own traditions and cultures."[3]

There is no doubt that inculturation, no matter how far one is willing or able to take it theologically, asks the Church in the West to examine its past, present and future. The questions it raises include: is theology *naturally* 'imperialistic'? Or was that just Western European theology?[4]
How much indigenous theology is being taught in theological training around the Anglican Communion for example? Is the promotion of inculturation *itself* another form of colonialism/imperialism?

In the study of mission several writers have examined such questions and in response highlighted the particular **relational** value of inculturation, being reconciliation and social justice.

i) Reconciliation

In his study of worship and mission J.G. Davies the perceived and real dichotomy between worship and mission. He writes: " One group of scholars, if they think of mission at all, are apt to discuss it as a form of activism, or at best, a by-product of that which is primary viz. cult; the other group, if they think of worship at all, see it as resulting in cultic introversion, which is the very opposite of the outward-looking attitude they desire."[5]
He refers to the apostolic writings in which there is a totality of mission and worship within Jesus' ministry cf. Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 3:1; Romans 12:1) and goes on to conclude that "moral behaviour is true cultus"[6], that the Lordship of Christ has broken through the partition between the sacred and the profane and that according to Paul the architectural space of the Old Testament temple has now become New Testament living community of the Word. There is he

3 John Mbiti *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1968, 264
4 NB. Western theology of clergy compounding the issues of development of inculturation.
5 J.G. Davies, *Worship and Mission* , 1966, 10 (cf Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, Fontana, 1963, 302)
6 Davies 1966 op cit 12 cf. Col 3:5; Eph 5:5; Jas 1:27

argues no essential distinction between worship and daily life (in the New Testament) and between worship and mission as mission takes place in daily life.[7]

So what has happened? What distortions between worship and mission prevail? Davies suggests the distortions are firstly the introversion of worship and secondly the self-glorification and self-aggrandisement of mission. Of the latter he argues for the acknowledgement of 'responsible dependency' which is one of the the essential aspects of worship. Of the former he makes the point that worship is not something that happens between the Church and God but between the world and God, the Church being no more than an instrument.

Davies has a 'low' view of the Church and a 'high' view of mission, believing that mission keeps calling the Church to "think over its essential nature as a community sent forth into the world."[8]

Mission is the criterion for all the activities of the Church: "it is exactly by going outside itself that the Church is itself and comes to itself...God is a sending God engaged in a sending economy."[9] For Davies, the content and purpose of mission is *reconciliation* and this is expressed supremely in the Eucharist since it is the celebration of humanity's reconciliation to God through the work of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit .

The Eucharist is the point at which worship and mission meet, the point in which the Church is called to be itself, reconciling the world to God and it is often the Eucharist which comes under the process of inculturation for this reason, so that more people may come to fully understand the true reconciliation to God that they have in Christ.

The Gospel is God's basis for human reconciliation in Christ[10] and provides in Christ the unity in which human diversity find its true context[11]. To accept Davies' definition, inculturation of Eucharistic liturgy can be seen to bridge the worlds of theology and worship with its main motivation being mission. Inculturated liturgy is ultimately mission-orientated in the sense it

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7 Davies 1966 op cit pp 12-15

8 op cit 21

9 D. Webster: "Should our Image of Mission Go? Prison Pamphlets, No. 15, cited by Davies 1966 op cit 4

10 cf.Ephesians 2:11f

11 cf.Ephesians 4:1f

seeks to make the Christian message of the Gospel more accessible to more people as they celebrate their identity in Christ. Reconciliation between humanity and God in Christ, between Christians and between the Church and the world can and should begin in the Church's worship and liturgy.

ii) Inculturation and social justice

The process of inculturation within the Church's mission and liturgical ministry in the past thirty years has brought with it a reawakening of social justice as well as a reconciliation. This view is taken by the official documents of the ecumenical World Council of Churches (WCC) although the emphasis has changed over the years.

In the 1960's the WCC approach to mission was that salvation is *synonymous* with social justice, exemplified by this preparatory statement for the WCC Uppsala Assembly in 1968 : "We have lifted up humanisation as the goal of mission."

In a 1982 WCC document on mission and evangelism the emphasis had changed whereby salvation was regarded as both individual *and* corporate, with the commitment to social justice being an integral aspect of the Church's mission and that the removal of social injustices demand not just structural changes but also personal attitudinal conversion.

"The planting of the Church in different cultures demands a positive attitude to the Gospel...Inculturation has as its source and inspiration the mystery of the Incarnation...Inculturation should not be understood merely as intellectual research; it occurs when Christians express their faith in the symbols and images of their respective culture. The best way to stimulate the process of inculturation is to participate in the struggle of the less privileged for their liberation. Solidarity is the best teacher of common values." [12]

The diversity and fragmentation of cultures presents Christian worship and mission with its most difficult task- even if there is, as the World Council of Churches put it, solidarity in the struggle of the less privileged for their liberation.

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[12] cf. "Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation" in *International Review of Mission*, vol 71, no. 284 (1982), 438. See also Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntandi*, (Sacred Congregation for Evangelisation, 1975) para 36. cited by Gerald Arbuckle, *Earthing the Gospel* 1990, 20-22
David Bosch equates truth with theory and justice with praxis and comments that there is a *danger* of contextual theology's stress on the need for a hermeneutic of suspicion "that suspecting tends to become an end in itself." Where this happens, theological conversation becomes "less and less a dialogue and more and more a power struggle about who is to be allowed to speak."

iii) Home-grown missioners

"We should be reminded that local Christians are better evangelists in their own context because they are culturally closer to the people. They are better able to adapt themselves to the cultural milieu of the people and would be more effective evangelists."[13]

Vincent Donovan in his evangelism among the Maasai in Tanzania wrote of local Maasai who simply emerged from his meetings with an understanding of the gospel and communication skills who became 'natural catechists and evangelists.' [14]

However this premise that 'local is best ' assumes that there is a *choice* in availability of missioners- this is not always the case and we may have to *learn* the Apostle Paul's method of becoming as 'one outside the law' in order to win those 'outside the law'.. for the sake of the gospel.[15]

Martinez suggests that the **cultural ingredients** that create the atmosphere for inculturation in the West include pluralism and the maturity of the Christian Churches. He also suggests that learning from major turning points in history has produced a "decisive shift in worship." He uses historical paradigms to enlighten present-day questions because the historical and socio-cultural peculiarities of people are an integral part of the theological definition of the Church.[16]

He cites the historical changes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as a case in point:

"The role of national self-consciousness and the development of new structural or conceptual changes can lead to either a strong self-reaffirmation of the past, mediaeval hierarchical and classical view of the Church, or a radicalism."[17]

In respect to sub-Saharan Africa's political and theological independence from European colonialism, this thesis has been borne out with the radicalism of a growing, self-consciously African theology and from it the development of African liturgies, such as the Zaire Mass and the Kenyan Service of Holy Communion.

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13 Nthamburi, op cit

14 Vincent Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered* 1978 109-119

15 cf. I Corinthians 9:20-22

16 cf Vatican II, Ad Gentes, No.22. German Martinez, "Cult and Culture: The Structure of the Evolution of Worship", *Worship* vol 64:5, September 1990, 409

17 Martinez 1990 op cit, 424

3. Liturgy and inculturation

I would assert that liturgy is the Church's mission statement. It reveals the theology, doctrine and pastoral concern of the Church within the context of worship.
Liturgy is also the Church's mission itself. It is an *outward* expression of the Christian faith. It communicates the Gospel of Christ within the rhythm of the liturgical year. It embraces the whole of humanity in celebrating the rites of passage, from birth to death. It puts into words what we can only begin to express ourselves. It is the history of the Christian Church: it embodies the debates, the controversies and discoveries that the Church has made. It can also continue controversies, highlighting the theological differences within the Church.
Liturgy therefore reflects the richness and complexity of the Christian Church.

What then about *inculturated* liturgy? If we accept the above definition, liturgy is the Church's mission statement and the assumption can be made that if liturgy is the Church's communication to the world about Christ then it will know the world into which it speaks. The challenge of inculturation is based on the assumption that the liturgy does *not* reflect the intimate knowledge of the world, that liturgy can seem alien to the world outside the Church and this therefore hinders the mission of the Church if one accepts the premise that liturgy is the Church's mission statement.

4. Inculturation of liturgy: a short history

i) Early Christian inculturation

As Diognetus' letter indicates, from its conception the Christian Church has had to face the issues of culture from Judaism, Greco-Roman society and paganism. As it faced these issues it was also defining itself, its understanding of the person of Christ and what it meant to be a follower of Christ and what it meant to be a church or gathering which distinct and yet part of all these different cultures.

As part of the account of the development and cultural adaptation of the Roman liturgy Anscar

Chupungco[18] suggests three elements of adaptation which were operative in the formation of early Christian liturgy:

"The first was the movement to imbue the Jewish liturgy with Christian faith and to retain elements and institutional links with the religion of Israel. The second was the extension of the gospel into non-Jewish environments and the adjustment of the requirements made upon pagan converts to Christianity. The third was the advance of Christianity into non-Jewish environments and the recognition that Christian faith must engage the religious convictions and aspirations of pagan religions."[19]

These elements of adaptation were intrinsically linked with the mission of the early Church as well as its self-understanding and theological identity as followers of Christ.

Because of the increasing alienation of Christians from the Jewish community a new Christian liturgical order emerged, beginning to be influenced by the Greco-Roman culture. The particular influence of this culture became significant to every aspect of the Christian church when, under Constantine in the fourth century it was recognised as the state religion of the empire. The influence on liturgy was visually apparent in terms of the vestments and

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18 Anscar Chupungco , *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy*, 1982, 6 cited by M.Francis Mannion, "Liturgy and Culture" *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, 1990, 307-313

19 M. Francis Mannion suggests that the history *of cultural adaptation* in liturgical matters can be seen in the interaction of four elements:

- a desire to remain faithful to the New Testament origins, themselves organically connected to the religious forms of Israel.
- the process by which the liturgical order incorporates ritual forms and customs from non-Christian environments
- a periodic reassertion of a normative [Roman] liturgy, especially in moments of perceived ritual corruption or compromise
- the conscious attempt to conceptualise the relationship between the liturgical tradition and non-Christian cultures so that non Christian elements may be used as vehicles of the gospel without compromising the gospel and the Christian tradition.

architecture and the cultural influences have remained strong to this day.[20]

ii) The 'double movement' of inculturation

In the radical reforms of Vatican II, Roman Catholicism clearly affirmed the role of inculturation of liturgy within the mission of the Church:

"By inculturation, the Church makes the gospel incarnated in different cultures, and at the same time introduces people, together with their cultures, into her own community".[21]

On the one hand the penetration of the gospel into a given socio-cultural milieu

" gives inner fruitfulness to the spiritual qualities and gifts proper to each people.... strengthens these qualities, perfects them and restores in Christ". On the other hand, the Church assimilates these values when they are compatible with the Gospel " to deepen understanding of Christ's message and give it more effective expression in the liturgy and in the many different aspects of the life of the community of believers".[22]

Thus Vatican II adopts both Niebuhr's typology of 'Christ and Culture in Paradox' and "Christ the Transformer of Culture'- which we have already asserted are the types for inculturation.

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[20] By the seventh century, the Roman liturgy was set in its basic shape and character but as it travelled northwards towards Franco-German territory it had to encounter a new set of cultural influences and the relatively sober Roman liturgical ethos began to take on a more notably dramatic and expressive character. The mediaeval development of extra-liturgical pageants, biblical dramatic presentations and passion plays reflected the increasing inaccessibility of the church liturgy for the people.
The' inaccessibility' of the Roman liturgy was to be a key part of Martin Luther's protest and thus reforms to the liturgy, including language, gestures and the use of Scripture in the vernacular became an important aspect of the Protestant Reformation.
NB. The *Chinese Rites Controversy* of the seventeenth century was the first, most celebrated conscious attempt to adapt the Roman liturgy to a non- Western culture.This was associated with Mateo Ricci and the Jesuit missionaries in China who proposed the incorporation into Catholic usage of Chinese terminology and sought a Christian adaptation of the traditional ancestral rites which were a profoundly constitutive element of Chinese piety. This led to the Roman Instruction of 1659 which distinguished between Christian faith and its European expression, recognising that Christian faith can make use of non-Christian rites and symbols and that these can serve as suitable instruments of the gospel.
However, the negative outcome of this controversy was to be an indication of the reception of cultural adaptation in the future and it was not to be until the documents of Vatican II that the Roman Catholic Church acknowledged, indeed embraced, the concept of cultural adaptation.
For general introduction to early liturgical development within the Church cf.*The Study of Liturgy* 1992. For the Chinese Rites Controversy cf. M. Francis Mannion, *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Theology*, op cit

[21] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 7 December 1990, n.52, AAS 83(1991), 300 cited by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments : *The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation: IV Institution* 1994 [CDWDS, 1994], 7

[22] Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n.58

The *goal* of inculturation of the Roman rite is laid down by the Second Vatican Council as the basis of the general restoration of the liturgy:

" Both texts and rites should be so drawn up that they express more clearly the holy things they signify and so that the Christian people, as far as possible, may be able to understand them with ease and to take part in the rites fully, actively and as befits a community."[23] The areas where inculturation is allowed to be applied within the rite are language, music and singing, gesture and posture and art.[24]

Like the Anglican Church in Kenya, Vatican II expresses a goal of inculturation of liturgy to be clarity, comprehension and full participation of the liturgy by the people of God within the context of expressing the mysteries of faith to the world.

The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* envisages the admission of rites or gestures according to local custom into rituals of Christian initiation, marriage and funerals.

"This is a stage of inculturation, but there is also the danger that the truth of the Christian rite and the expression of the Christian faith could be easily diminished in the eyes of the faithful. Fidelity to traditional usages must be accompanied by purification, and, if necessary, a break with the past. The same applies, for example, to the possibility of Christianising pagan festivals or holy places, or to the priest using the signs of authority reserved to the Heads of civil society, or for the veneration of ancestors. In every case it is necessary to avoid any ambiguity."

This statement puts a cautionary note onto the application of inculturation in Africa and one can understand why the Zaire Mass with its invocation of the saints and ancestors has not received universal approval.

There is here a rejection of the wholesale acceptance of a particular culture suggesting there may have to be 'breaks with the past'. There is little said about *which* aspects of the past (e.g.Westernisation?) should be broken with however!

Since Vatican II, the caution has continued with several Papal letters clarifying that the process

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23 Vatican Council II,Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 21

24 Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 30, 33,118,119

of inculturation should maintain the substantial *unity of the Roman rite.*[25] These notes of caution have been made, it would seem, in light of the development of the Roman rite in countries which have taken on board wholeheartedly the spirit of Vatican II and have created liturgies which are culturally quite distinct in style, such as the Zaire Mass.

Regarding the task of inculturation, Pope John Paul II said " this is not to suggest to the particular Churches that they have a new task to undertake following the application of liturgical reform, that is to say, adaptation or inculturation,. Nor is it intended to mean inculturation as the creation of alternative rites... It is a question of collaboration that the Roman rite maintaining its own identity, may incorporate suitable adaptations."[26]

Catholic liturgist Anscar Chupungco agrees with this approach, affirming the need to maintain this 'substantial unity'; that to adapt liturgy within a particular culture does not mean " returning to primitive and discarded way [but to] ...firmly established values and traditions which have shaped for many generations...the religious , family, social and national life of the people."[27]

Chupungco argues that it is necessary that the cultural elements to be admitted should possess the *connaturality* ` to express the meaning of the Roman elements which they are to substitute or illustrate and also be *compatible* with the Roman liturgy. Therefore to acknowledge and incorporate a particular culture means that the essential Roman sacramental theology remains the same. What's more, the cultural elements should be subjected to a process of purification whereby they acquire Christian meaning , reinterpreting them in light of Christian mystery and in the manner of patristic practice, of imposing biblical typology on them.[28]

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25 op cit, nn.37-40

26 John Paul II, *Discourse to the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments*, 26 January,1991 n.3

27 Anscar Chupungco, *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy* 1982 , 77 . Chupungco cites three types of liturgical adaptation; 'accommodation' which does not necessarily involve cultural adaptation [see above]; liturgical 'acculturation' where there is a change or modification of the essential Roman rite and 'adaptation.'

28 op cit 82

5. Features of inculturated liturgy:

i) Liturgy: the public context of Christianity

Schineller, in his essay discussing the inculturation of the Roman Catholic Eucharistic liturgy, highlights the need to discuss first the *context* where the liturgy takes place; that the challenge that liturgy brings is that it is the 'shop front' of the Christian faith.
Liturgy " is the public celebration of the faith of a particular people, and unless that lived faith is inculturated into the customs and culture of that people, the liturgy will remain foreign or even imposed, rather than flowing from the lives of the people."[29]
Liturgy is in the public arena and therefore has to acknowledge the cultural milieu within which God's people worship Him.

ii) Liturgy as celebration

The second focus should be the goal that is desired in inculturation of the liturgy: that of demonstrating within it the new life and hope that faith in Christ brings (1 Peter 1:3) The celebration of the Eucharist should be just that...a *celebration* of the redemption of the world.

.."a Eucharistic celebration that is vital, challenging and liberating... if truly inculturated, is indeed the source and summit of Christian life, and impels those who actively participate *to go forward* to witness to that life in the market place."[30]

Using the analogy of a birthday event, people who have come to the birthday party with its *common focus* on the person whose birthday it is, will bring cards and presents on the understanding of and according to cultural expectation and ritual.
There will also be rituals-within-the-ritual like blowing out candles on the birthday cake and making a wish and the singing of the song "Happy Birthday".

So with the celebration of faith, the ritual, context and focus have to be clear to those

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29 Chupungco 1982, op cit 598
30 op cit 598 [italics mine]

celebrating. If there is confusion as to who/ what is being celebrated because of culturally inappropriate liturgy then it will not be a *fully public* celebration. It will have excluded some, if not all.

iii) Liturgy: the focus of koinonia

Koinonia is a distinctly Christian relationship (e.g.1 Corinthians 12:12ff) which is the work of the Holy Spirit through the presence of Christ, celebrated particularly in the Eucharist. "The relationship of faith and love between its members are in the first instance created by Christ, though they are to be realised and strengthened by the Eucharist, which is the sacramental sign of koinonia, of communion, the union of minds and hearts in faith and love."[31]

Koinonia is also a quality of Christian mission which, Nthamburi argues, is needed by those who are unloved by society: "Perhaps the greatest need of our time is for *koinonia*. This is a call for the Church to be the Church by loving one another and opening our lives to others for the sake of the kingdom. It is when our love reaches out to those who are oppressed, poor and marginalised that we begin to see the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of those people. Out of the overflowing love the frontier peoples will respond to the message of the gospel."[32]

However, one must ask the question: is Christian love always universally accepted by 'frontier peoples' or do they fear a conformist, cultural 'sub-agenda' as the churches in the Southern Hemisphere have experienced ? We need to be aware that the Christian agape or koinonia comes as 'naked' as the Christian gospel, without excess cultural, political or social baggage.

In a recent ecumenical report "Towards Koinonia in Worship"[33] there was affirmation that liturgy, as the pattern of Christian worship "is to be spoken of as a gift of God, not as a demand nor as a tool for power over others... At the heart of the worship of Christians stands the crucified Christ, who is one with the little and abused ones of the world. Liturgy done in his name cannot abuse. It must be renewed, rather, by love and invitation and the teaching of its sources and meaning...

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31 J.D.Crichton "A Theology of Worship" in *The Study of Liturgy* 1992, 22

32 Nthamburi, op cit, 143

33 "Towards Koinonia in Worship: Consultation on the Role of Worship Within the Search for Unity" *Studia Liturgica* vol 25:1, 1995 1-29

Furthermore, this pattern is to be celebrated as a most profound connection between faith and life, between gospel and creation, and between Christ and culture, not as an act of unconnected ritualism, nor anxious legalism. "[34]

Of inculturation the report affirms that churches may "rightly" ask each other about the local inculturation of the 'ordo' of Christian worship:

"They may call each other toward a maturation in the use of this pattern or a renewed clarification of its central characteristics or, even, toward a conversion to its use."

Koinonia, the report states, between local churches is only enriched by those authentic forms of inculturation which the ordo may have taken in each local church, not diminished.[35]

Schineller's primary concern in this essay to affirm the public nature of liturgy as the 'work of the people', the involvement of the whole particular community for its liturgy.[36]

"... liturgy is indeed the public prayer of the people of the local community and it must be an expression of their faith and their struggle for a life of justice, their living the kingdom vision. Thus in the moving to a truly inculturated liturgy, it is the entire community that must eventually take responsibility for the liturgy, even if in its formative stages this will depend heavily upon the liturgical leaders and their collaborators."[37]

In both the Zaire Mass and the ACK Holy Communion liturgy there is particular emphasis placed upon the importance of 'community', which derives from the characteristically African understanding of humanity: 'we are, therefore I am' (Mbiti). If African Theology is influencing such new African liturgies then one could say that they fulfil Schineller's criteria for inculturated liturgies.i.e. coming from within the African community-diverse though it may be.

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34 *Towards Koinonia* op cit 7

35 op cit, 8

36 Peter Schineller SJ suggests three approaches for those concerned with developing inculturated liturgy:

1. Familiarity with the various possibilities of liturgical expression and symbolism in Christianity
2. Being immersed in local culture, to know how that particular community gathers together, prays, sings, expresses its faith most in accord with their cultural heritage.
3. That the liturgical leadership calls forth and involves the gifts, talents and sensibilities of the community for which it is responsible as well as being in dialogue with the larger church and the church authorities.

cf. "Inculturation of the Liturgy", *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, 1990, 599

37 op cit, 599

6. African Theology and inculturation

"Theology that claims to liberate cannot afford to alienate...To liberate itself from the Western static and abstract forms, African theology must take more seriously its most important source, African religion and culture" [38].

It has been said that inculturated theology is an expression of the struggle for theological self-hood from the domination of Western theologies on the part of the South, of African, Asian and Latin American Christians and that it reflects historically speaking a post-colonial Christian experience.[39]

What is core to most inculturated theologies and liturgies is the Incarnation

In African Theology, the issue of theological identity recurs, primarily because, it is argued, the 'bringers of the Gospel ' brought their culturally-specific identity with them and the two were regarded as synonymous.

Moreover it is not just the theological identity of African Christians as distinctly African and distinctly Christian, but also the theological identity of Christ Himself.[40]

i) Identity

"The African Church needs to break itself from the aprons of its mother church in Europe and America if it is to grow into maturity.The Church in Africa must cultivate its own structures and theology in order to shed the swaddling clothes of its birth. It has now come of age and must have its own identity."[41]

The development of theology from a self-consciously African perspective in the past 30 years has highlighted three theological challenges to the Church in the West: the challenge of the Church's theological identity, the challenge of our relationship to our culture and the challenge to the Church for a theological response to culture.

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38 Z. Nthambuni :*The African Church at the Crossroads: A Strategy for Indigenization* 1991, 64

39 Koyama,op cit, 291

40 For example, Sundkler writes in the 1940's of the apartheid system in South Africa creating a 'Black Christ' Christology amongst the oppressed black, indigenous churches. cf. Bengt G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, 1961, 278-289

41 Nthambuni 1991 op cit, 111

ii) Human Identity

The African theologian Alphonse Ngindu Mushete wants to speak of this not only of incarnation but of "humanisation, or better still, of humanification." To become a human person is to become a bundle of interpersonal relations welding the human subject to the human community and to the totality of the cosmos. Understood thus, the incarnation of the Word takes up the whole of humankind and the cosmos.[42]

Mushete cites the Accra colloquium in Paris 1979[43] which underlined and affirmed this African understanding of humanity in relation to the cosmos: that the human destiny may be defined primarily as a dramatic conflict between life and death and that the conflict has but one meaning : the victory of life over death.

The human being in the struggle between life and death and the universe conceived in the human image, is torn by the same conflict. Therefore it is divided into two camps, one consisting of those who espouse life and the other of those who are on the side of death. Hence human beings taking for granted that life will prove victorious ensure not only their own destiny but that of the world.

The so-called diffused monotheism of African traditional religion, a complex world of spirits and one God can thus be understood within a framework of Incarnational theology, that Christ who has had the ultimate victory over death offers life to those who believe in Him.

iii) African identity

"For us, the rapid growth of the people of God in Africa, the originality of the African experience of Christian life in worship, a typically African liturgy, Bible reading and communitarian life are signs of hope and confidence."[44]

This final declaration of the Accra colloquium in 1979 affirms a sense of cultural and spiritual vitality and optimism that has fired the further development of distinct African theology and the

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42 Alphonse Ngindu Mushete, "The figure of Jesus in African Theology" *Concilium 196* ,1988, 76

43 Accra Colloquium, 1979, Mushete op cit ,75

44 "*Adaptation or liberation? La theologie africaine s'interroge* " The Accra Colloquium, Paris 1979 cited by Alphonse Ngindu Mushete in "Christian Identity", *Concilium 196*, 1988, 74

pursuit of social, spiritual and cultural liberation from European dominance.

To understand the identity of a culture requires a knowledge of an underlying world view (see chapter 2) and the African world view that emerges from the study of the cultural and religious traditions of the African nations has been summarised and affirmed in the Roman Catholic *Accra Colloquium* of 1979 thus:

"The African remains deeply realistic in everything.
Together with this sense of reality the African has a feeling for nature. Almost instinctively, he or she has a sense of divine mystery and of divine transcendence. Consequently Africans have a sense of the sacred.
Human destiny constitutes the foundation, purpose and contents of the cultural expressions of the African nations.
This destiny may be defined primarily as a dramatic conflict between life and death.
The conflict has but one meaning: the victory of life over death.
The human being is rent by the struggle between life and death, and the universe conceived in the human image, is torn by the same conflict. Therefore it is divided into two camps: one consisting of those who espouse life, and the other of those who are on the side of death.
Human beings, taking for granted that life will prove victorious, ensure not only their own destiny but that of the world. The human being is the very microcosm at the heart of the macrocosm and assures overall unity.
The African man or woman also lives as a collegial being, as a bundle of interpersonal and cosmic relations. S/he is simultaneously: a monad, an individual and not a person; a dyad, man and woman, when s/he constitutes a person; a triad, father, mother and child, when s/he becomes a family, society or community.
As a person, a man or woman is therefore simultaneously welded to human kind and to the world."

"Human destiny is the dramatic conflict between life and death, a conflict which finds its purpose in the victory of life over death. There is unity between the destiny of the person and that of the cosmos...In African theology, the salvation of the human person is the salvation of the universe and in the mystery of Christ's incarnation it comprehends the human and cosmic

totalities "[45]

As we have already observed, this is not a unique understanding of an African world view and there are African theologians who question the very feasibility of summing up the complexity and richness of African cultures in *homo africanus.*

John Pobee asks "who is *homo africanus* in all the cultural, religious, political diversity of that vast continent which is at least thrice the size of the USA?...In any case, what may be traditional now may be foreign to another generation of homo africanus."[46]

That is, there can be no such thing as one African world view, one theology, *one* approach to liturgy, or one African Anglican liturgy for that matter because of the plurality of cultures within the sub-Saharan continent.
This is a valid question in our pursuit of inculturation which holds in tension the principle of dialogue and with this an embracing of diversity of cultures, and the principle of the universality of the Gospel.

7. African Christian liturgy

"We are because He is"[47]

Kwame Bediako has asserted that we have new identity solely in Jesus Christ, now that he "has made himself known, becoming one of us, one like us. By acknowledging him for who he is, and by giving him our allegiance, we become what are truly intended to be, by his gift, that is, the children of God...Our response to him is crucial because becoming children of God does not stem from, nor is it limited by, the accidents of birth, race, culture, lineage or even 'religious' tradition. It comes to us by grace through faith."[48]

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45 Accra Colloquium, Paris 1979, cited by Alphonse Ngindu Mushete,"The Figure of Jesus in African Theology", *Concilium*, 1988, 77
46 op cit, 42,43
47 cf Communion acclamations, *A Kenyan Service of Holy Communion*, ACK 1989 op cit
48 Bediako, op cit, 62

The subsequent development of liturgy within the African Church takes these challenges further: a challenge to reflect the theological identity in liturgy, affirming that we are made in the image of *God*, not man[49]; a challenge to establish a relationship-centred liturgy that is based on the relationship of the Trinity and out-worked in community, affirming the African dictum "we are therefore I am". The third challenge is for an outward response from the Church to the local and national context.

In liturgical terms this can be interpreted as *'We worship, therefore we are'*. Because of the One whom we worship becoming the Incarnate, Emmanuel, our new identity in Christ is reaffirmed in worship, not least in the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.
As African Theology reminds us our Christian identity is not individualistic but communal. We are not the 'only child' but part of a world-wide family.
"The Incarnation is God's self-inculturation in this world and in a particular context."[50]

Fr. Aylward Shorter would argue that inculturation as a definition refers to history not essence, that Jesus is an inculturated Person, we are inculturated people. In you is Christ as an African, a Latin American, a European...[51] Shorter[52] would thus affirm a supracultural Gospel and a supracultural Christ which is the Divine Paradox, that is, Jesus Christ, fully human and fully divine.

8. Inculturation and Dialogue

There are presuppositions to inculturation that include the existence of a shared world of beliefs, ideas and experiences which enables words and phrases to convey intended meaning

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49 This term is gender specific and refers to the implication of cultural and theological from nineteenth century missionary activity

50 "[contd.]..Jesus' ministry on earth includes both the acceptance of a particular culture and also a confrontation of elements in that culture ...which is contrary to the good news or to God's righteousness"
Report from the *Fifth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation*,1995, 40

51From a personal interview with Fr. Aylward Shorter , Mill Hill Institute, London , April 1995

52 cf. also Vincent J. Donovan *Christianity Discovered* , 1982 ,47-48

between speaker and hearer[53] .

The 'shared world' in sub-Saharan Africa might include both the common aspects of African traditional religions, that is, community-centred, with significant importance of ancestors and cultural tradition and also the growing impact of rapid urbanisation and with this, secularisation.

To have a *shared* world of inculturation implies a mutuality of understanding which in turn demands dialogue between cultures and particularly between the bringers of the Gospel, the Church at mission, and the culture into which it is brought. This is an exchange of world view in which both sides are at least equally heard.

As African theologians have indicated, in the context of African historical experience not all contact between different cultures means automatically an enrichment for the cultures concerned. Contact between cultures can also be destructive.

Every one-directional process of cultural assimilation ignores the riches of originality and creativity in a given culture and leads to an impoverishment of human values and identity. This ethnocentric approach can lead easily into paternalism and cultural dependence. For communication between cultures to be fruitful there has to be a two-way exchange of views, that is a *dia*-logue.

In the application of dialogue within inculturation, Ary Roest Crollius SJ suggests that the purpose of this communication "is not to cancel the diversity of the various meanings in making them coalesce into one single meaning. Rather, in and through the dialogue, the originality of the diverse meanings becomes manifest. But, at the same time, their communicability in the dialogue shows forth a universality of these meanings beyond the confines of a particular culture."[54]

However, as Crollius points out, there is a danger of cultural relativism with the principle of dialogue where all cultures are regarded as equally valid and equally absolute, creating "a plethora of minor ethnocentrism" rather than a "dialogical community of cultures".[55]

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53 Crichton 1992,19

54 Ary Roest Crollius,SJ, *Inculturation: Its meaning and urgency,* (Eds.)J.M. Waliggo et al,1996, 62

55 op cit, 63

If cultural diversity is acknowledged and relativism is avoided, dialogue between cultures not only enables understanding of the 'otherness' of the other but also can bring a deeper understanding of oneself. Therefore dialogue is essential to theological and liturgical inculturation if different cultural world views are to be known, understood and celebrated within Christian liturgy and the universality of the meaning of the Gospel is to be confirmed in each culture.

Thus inculturation cannot be a cultural *mono*logue by definition.

i) African inculturation and dialogue

African theology reflects the dialogue between African cultures and the Church with the voices of history, identity and experience. They are voices that embrace the historical impact of missionary Christianity as well as the pre-Christian religious heritage; the theological and cultural identity of the African and the theological response to these factors as well as the fast-changing nature of African societies and to the growing number of indigenous churches.

Within liturgical inculturation, the voices of *all people* need to be heard. In the Kanamai Statement of the Council of African Provinces in Africa (1993) the first principle/guideline for liturgical renewal is stated as dialogue:

"Listen to the needs of, and consult with, the whole body of worshippers, young and old, male and female, rich and poor, rural and urban, the literate and the non-literate; what do they want to express before God, and how?"[56]

Dialogue seems the most obvious principle in introducing liturgical change that is inculturated but is easily overlooked in the pursuit of academics who hypothesise about 'what people want' in worship.

Theologian and anthropologist Gerald Arbuckle states that inculturation is a faith venture...nurtured in prayer "[57] and I would agree, that the most important 'dialogue' is the Church at **prayer**- the aspect of Christian life that is so evident among the African Indigenous

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[56]Section 1:1, *The Kanamai Statement: African Culture and Anglican Liturgy* [31 May - 4 June 1993],1994, 37

[57] Gerald Arbuckle1990, 191

Churches and the African Church in general.[58]

John Mbiti describes the African spirituality and understanding of God that under girds the African approach to prayer:

"According to African peoples, man lives in a religious universe, so that natural phenomena and objects are intimately associated with God. They not only originate from Him, but also bear witness to Him...Man sees in the universe not only the imprint but reflection of God; and whether the image is marred or clearly focused and defined, it is nevertheless, an image of God, the only image known in traditional African societies."[59]

Any liturgical change has to be prayerful as well as pastoral, theological and spiritual.

9. Inculturation of Anglican liturgy

'It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly alike; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of the countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word...Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordainced only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying."

Article XXXIV, 1662 Book of Common Prayer

Anglicanism is founded on a constitution which actively encourages a plurality of customs and rites, with each Province having total autonomy over their own liturgy. In practice however, until relatively recently, there has been a reluctance to be liturgically independent among the Provinces.

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58 In reference to the importance of prayer in the life of African Christians I refer to personal experience whilst on placement in the ACK Diocese of Kirinyaga, Kenya in 1994:
" The inter-relation between God, humanity and nature in African spirituality is very evident in the approach to prayer [cf.John Mbiti cited]...This profound understanding of the presence of God in the world is reflected in prayer. For me, giving thanks to God for the provision of a cup of tea, which is the Christian norm in this area, helped me appreciate the fact that people take nothing for granted, however seemingly small...Another aspect of this very African (cf. Mbiti) approach to prayer was the *expectation* of God to act...
In worship, the birth of a child, the first crops of the season, or even the birth of baby rabbits were occasions for the [Sunday] congregation to thank and praise God corporately."

59 John Mbiti *African Religions and Philosophy* 1969, 48

This has been true of the African provinces and there may have been several reasons for this, not least the loyalty and fervour with which the 1662 Book of Common Prayer [BCP] was brought by the first Anglican missionaries.

Colin Buchanan suggests some reasons for this early loyalty to the Prayer Book. Firstly, that it was seen as better than any other worship book and its use was crucial to 'being Anglican'; secondly, it represented a theological agenda among missionaries-either to elaborate on it (among the Anglo-Catholics) or to fight for it (among the Evangelicals) and thirdly there was a lack of ability and awareness to inculturate existing religious traditions.[60]

The liturgical focus upon the BCP as the reason for a lack of diverse rites in Africa (as well as other parts of the Anglican Communion) was furthered by its translation into vernacular languages, as well as the Bible and combined with a reluctance to change (a characteristic of church life, it seems to me) it has remained highly influential in the life of Anglicanism in Africa today.[61]

It must also be remembered that the use of the Prayer Book was regarded as the locus of unity for the Anglican Communion until the Lambeth Conference in 1958 even though liturgical changes were underfoot before then, for example, the Church of South India (1954).[62]

The 1958 Conference was reminded of the fact that the liturgies did not *have* to be identical and that liturgical revision was permissible.

In 1978 the Conference encouraged the principle of flexibility in liturgy:

"In the past, the Book of Common Prayer was an important unifying factor in Anglican worship...We believe...unity in structure can rightly co-exist with flexibility in context and variety in cultural expressions for the Holy Spirit is both a spirit of order and unpredictable wind..."[63]

Even so, the Provinces were slow on the uptake and any liturgical change tended to be focussed

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60 Bishop Colin Buchanan, "Issues of Liturgical Inculturation", in *Anglican Liturgical Inculturation in Africa*, [including the Kanamai Statement] 1993, 14

61 The influence of the BCP on the ACK Service of Holy Communion (see above).
In my experience the BCP remains the liturgical foundation of the Anglican Church in Kenya and for this reason I suggest that it will take another generation (at least) before the new liturgy is fully received by the ordinary worshipper.

62 T.S.Garrett, *Worship in the Church of South India*, 1958

63 The Report of the Lambeth Conference 1978, 94-95

focussed on texts for the Eucharistic prayer rather than cultural specifics.[64]

"It is one of the glories of the Anglican tradition that it has grasped so firmly the primacy of worship and its nature as the corporate voice of the church...with liturgical change being a trialogue between synodical government, scholars reexamining liturgical history and popular religious instinct."[65]

Such an enthusiastic response to Anglican liturgical development would be borne out in concrete terms in the Lambeth Conference of 1988 when it made two separate resolutions urging a genuine inculturation of the liturgy. These resolutions were the starting points for the York Statement.

In the introduction to the 'inculturation statement ' of the Third International Anglican Consultation (1989)[66] held in York, it was stated that "liturgy to serve the contemporary church should be truly inculturated."[67]

The two Lambeth Resolutions (1988) which were reaffirmed in this Consultation:

i) *Resolution 22: Christ and culture*

"This conference a) recognises that culture is the context in which people find their identity; b) affirms that ...the gospel judges every culture...challenging some aspects of the culture while endorsing others for the benefit of the church and society; c) urges the church everywhere to work at expressing the unchanging gospel of Christ in words, actions, names, customs, liturgies which communicate relevantly in each society."

ii) Resolution 47: Liturgical freedom

"This conference resolves that each Province should be free subject to essential Anglican norms of worship and a valuing of traditional materials, to seek that expression of worship which is appropriate to Christian people in their cultural context."

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64 Buchanan comments on this lack of 'indigenized liturgy, that in his collection of Eucharistic texts from 1958-1985 "virtually all I could find with any flavour of indigenisation in it was a rubric about a *'bell or drum or rattle'* which was in the Papua New Guinea rite in the 1970's...and a rubric about the Peace in Korea which instructed the people to bow to each other (as that is their from of greeting) just as the Maoris in New Zealand may rub noses."
Colin Buchanan op cit (1994), 17
See also:*Modern Anglican Liturgies 1958-1968,* 1968
Further Anglican Liturgies 1968-1975, 1975
Latest Anglican Liturgies 1976-1984 1985

65 Brooks & Vasey *Liturgical Inculturation* 1990, 24

66 op cit

67 David Holeton (Ed.) *Liturgical Incutlration in the Anglican Communion* 1990, 3

10. Liturgical implications of inculturation

If we are to agree with the creed of the liturgical world *lex orandi lex credendi* , that is the principle which states that the rule of faith is established by liturgical practice, then the *inculturation* of liturgy will create a new understanding of the Christian faith.
This means dialogue with the culture, history and life experience of a given group of people and allowing them to respond to the Gospel of Christ out of these factors.
This is the basic premise of African theology: that the way we do theology, the way we reflect on the nature of God and our new identity in Christ, will be affected by our culture, history and life experience and that there is no such thing, as Bishop Kalihombe asserts, as a 'normative' theology.'[68] By this he means an exclusive, ethnocentric theology which has been a criticism of Western theology by African theologians such as John Pobee.
"The rise of African theology and black theologies on the continent of Africa is not only a reminder that the eternal, non-negotiable word of God can and should enter into dialogue with the African context, body, heart and soul, but also that the formulation of the theological agenda by the North Atlantic...is not the last word on the subject."[69]

Martinez in his examination of the development of Christian worship (and in particular the Liturgical Movement of the past fifty years) suggests that learning from major turning points in history has produced a decisive shift in worship.
In the Church of England alone in the past ten years there have been the commissioning of new liturgical rites for Advent, Lent and Easter, a service of the Word and the commissioning of new Eucharistic prayers.
Alongside these developments has been a shift ecclesiologically with the growth of so-called 'church plants', with parishes expanding their worship bases and the growth of non-stipendiary, local ministry and increased lay involvement.

The cultural ingredients that create the atmosphere for inculturation in the West include

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68 R.C. Bishop Patrick Kalihombe (Malawl) :"What is Black Theology?" Nottingham Theological Society, St. John's College,Bramcote, Nottingham, Autumn 1995
69 John S. Pobee, "Mission, Paternalism and the Peter Pan Syndrome" in *Crossroads are for meeting:essays on the Mission and Common Life of the Church in a Global Society*, 1996, 96

pluralism and the maturity of the Christian churches and the historical and socio-cultural peculiarities of people are an integral part of the theological definition of the Church.[70]

The whole theological enterprise is, of necessity, a cultural exercise. If theology is to make any sense, it must use the language of its surrounding culture and this in turn affects what theology is saying ...We simply cannot escape culture any more than we can escape language.[71] Furthermore we cannot escape inculturation any more than we can escape mission.

70 G. Martinez *Cult and Culture* 1990 , 409 cf Vatican II, Ad Gentes 22

71 D. Tomlinson *The Post- Evangelical,* 1995, 132

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUDING CHAPTER: LITURGY IS ABOUT LIFE

In his classic 1945 study of the Eucharist *The Shape of the Liturgy* Dom Gregory Dix pre-empted the process of inculturation of the liturgy in the concluding chapter where he heralded a call to the Church to have a high regard for liturgy in the expression of human life.
"We have forgotten that the study of liturgy is the study of *life* , that Christian worship has always been done by real men and women whose contemporary circumstances have all the time a profound effect upon the ideas and aspirations with which they come to worship. We must grasp the fact that worship cannot take place in an ecclesiastical Avalon, but to a large extent reflects the ever-changing needs and ideas of worshippers. So it gives rise all the time to new notions by the interaction of these urgent contemporary ideas in the minds of those worshipping by ancient inherited forms. Thus arises the ever-shifting emphasis of Christian devotion and 'devotions, which plays around the liturgy, interpreting it afresh to every generation and to every race."[1]

Throughout this study we have acknowledged the changing nature of culture but have affirmed the Church's primary task as being communicating the Gospel.
Our focus has been upon the development of inculturated liturgies in particular that of the Anglican Church in Kenya's Service of Holy Communion within the context of African Theology.
Through our study there have emerged three key principles of inculturation that can be applied to liturgy: Incarnation, Mission and Dialogue.
The Incarnation of God in Christ has been described as "God's self-inculturation in this world and in a particular context."[2] Kwame Bediako asserts that the Incarnation has a direct impact on human identity...that as Christians we have a new identity solely in Jesus Christ.[3] This can be expressed in an adaptaion of Mbiti's maxim: **We worship therefore we are.**

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1 Dom Gregory Dix 1945, 741-2.
2 "Renewing the Anglican Eucharist" *The Fifth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation*,1995,40
3 Kwame Bediako 1992, op cit 62

John Mbiti wrote that "Christianity did not land on empty ground. They found African people deeply immersed in their own traditions and cultures"[4] and the Church's mission has to recognise the pre-Christian religious past in a particular culture for it is at the basis of that culture's world view cf. Barney's model of culture.
Mission is not what the Church does but what it is. Mission is the self-expression of the Church particularly within liturgy and particularly in the celebration of the Eucharist. Inculturation of Eucharistic liturgy therefore can be seen to bridge the worlds of theology awn worship with its main motivation being the communication of the Gospel through mission. Inculturation is ultimately mission-orientated in the sense that liturgy seeks to make the Christian message of the Gospel more accessible to more people as they demonstrate and celebrate their new identity in Christ within their culture.

1. Proclaiming the supracultural Gospel

The challenge of inculturation will continue as long as the Church exists since the Gospel has to be proclaimed in every time and culture. What every major writer on the subject of theological or liturgical inculturation insists is that there is a Gospel norm or 'essence' which is beyond cultural control.

Lamin Sanneh speaks helpfully of the intrinsic power of the gospel within a cultural context. "A popular but erroneous view has been promoted in several quarters regarding the naturalness of separating gospel and culture with the assumption in that by the procedure Christians can get at the gospel pure and simple...The pure gospel , stripped of all cultural entanglements, would evaporate in a vague abstraction, although if the gospel were without its own intrinsic power it would be nothing more than cultural ideology...The real challenge is to identify this intrinsic power without neglecting the necessary cultural factor."[5]

Throughout our study we can observe that the assumption has been made that the Gospel of

4 John Mbiti 1969, op cit, 264
5 Lamin Sanneh1993, op cit, 117

Christ is universal or 'supracultural'. Stated simply, the 'universal norm' of Christianity is Jesus Christ.

As far as worship is concerned, Christian liturgy is taking place when it is possible to discern Jesus Christ in the reading and exposition of Scriptures, which bear earliest witness to him; when prayers are being made 'in his name'; when his sacramental presence is experienced; and when he is seen in the quality of life displayed by the worshippers.[6]

The process of inculturation of liturgy and indeed theology comes both from within the Church and without: both the recognition that the Church is placed *in* the world and therefore needs to know its environment in terms of communicating the Gospel within the world and also that the Church is not *of* the world and therefore needs to know the distinctions..

2. Inculturation is a Post-Modernist Issue

One could argue that when all is said and done, the whole concept of inculturation is 'a sign of the times, the result of our currently post-modernist society. Post modernism has been described as the cultural and intellectual phenomena which include the rejection of 'foundationalism', the view that science is built on a firm base of observable facts; a questioning of the key commitments of the Enlightenment; an interest in the local rather than the universal ; an exchange of the printed book for the TV screen, the migration from word to image; there is prominence of new information and communication technologies, globalisation and consumerism.[7]

Certainly within the inculturation debate, the recognition of the 'other-ness' of others; the plurality of cultures; greater recognition of human experience as valid truth and suspicion of institutional ideologies (e.g.imperialism) are all post-modern phenomenon.[8]

Subsequently, a pluralist culture requires diverse forms of church and of church worship. Inculturation of theology and liturgy provide for this diversity.

"The Church has always tried to provide a single worship setting which would be equally

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6 *Getting the Liturgy Right: Practical Liturgical Principles for Today*, 1972, 94

7 . David Lyon *Post modernity* ,Open University Press, Buckingham 1994, 7

8 K.C. Abraham: "Globalisation: a Gospel and Culture Perspective", *International Review of Mission* vol 85:No. 336, January 1996, 98

acceptable to every midi-culture...there may come a time when it is impossible to keep the different midi-cultures together in one act of worship...It is clear in some places that a form of worship which really satisfies nobody is no longer acceptable, as people leave in search of something where they can feel comfortably at home".[9]

John Finney, like African theologians, uses the post modern phrase 'at home' to imply a place of certainty and familiarity at a time when traditional institutions and traditional certainties struggle and spirituality is diverse and sometimes contradictory...such is the plight of a post-modern world.

There is an irony about the rapid social and cultural changes in our world which sociologists call post modernism, in which there is recognition of plurality with the use of the language of 'rights' and yet there is globalisation in which capitalism is the driving force of increasing centralisation of the world's production and trade in the hands of a few hundreds of multinational companies and financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, thus creating a world economic centripetal force... a new kind of cultural imperialism, with its conquering flags emblazoned with names like Nike, Macdonald's and Coca-Cola.

Indian theologian K.C. Abraham comments on this clash within post modernism:

The globalisation process ...promotes a consumerist culture for profit. Under its influence human relationships are..distorted. Commodity mentality pervades them...A homogenising attitude that negates the individual identities of our people is one of the characteristics of the globalisation process...Perhaps in our times the [Christian] mission means a critical rejection of the process and structures that are inimical to an open community, forces that threaten life, practices that do not promote justice and love and above all an attitude of apathy towards change.[10]

Being a vehicle of incarnational theology, holistic mission and dialogue, inculturation is a process that challenges such effects of post modernity in globalisation. It affirms the Christian identity, what it means to be 'in Christ'[11] and it affirms one's cultural identity, to 'be in the

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[9] John Finney, cited by Graham Cray: *The Gospel for Post Modernity*, Ridley Hall, Cambridge, May 1996, Unpublished Paper

[10] K.C. Abraham 1996, op cit 91

[11] Galatians 3:28

world'.[12]

Inculturation and the homogeneity

A potential weakness in the application of inculturation is that it could be used to support the missiological and ecclesiological 'homogeneous unit principle' where churches are developed to have a culturally (usually a sub-culture) homogeneous congregation.[13]
The Christian Church is called to have an essentially corporate nature, to be 'the Body of Christ'[14] with its diverse yet interdependent parts so a 'homogeneous unit principle,' although it may have its uses in terms of evangelism, cannot be a general principle of ecclesiology since our God is not homogeneous but Trinitarian.
"The one God who is himself characterised by diversity within unity has decreed the same for his church."[15]

3. Inculturation: the challenge to Anglicanism

The church's worship does not merely reflect or express its repertoire of faith. It transacts the church's faith in God under the condition of God's real presence in both church and world. The liturgy does this to a degree of regular comprehensiveness which no other mode or level of faith-activity can equal.[16]

Since the general usage of the term 'inculturation' began in the 1970's among the Jesuit community, the post- Vatican II Roman Catholic Church has made significant strides forward in developing and applying the process. The Anglican Church, by comparison, has been seemingly slower to apply the principles of inculturation to worship and mission.

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12 cf John 17:18

13 A Western example of this approach is the Willow Creek Community for the 'unchurched' in the United States whereevangelism is aimed at young middle class people: a coffee lounge/ multimedia appraoch has been taken to worship. cf Paul Simmonds: *Reaching the Unchurched*, 1992

14 1 Cor 12:27; Eph 4:12

15 Gordon Fee, cited by Graham Cray, op cit

16 Aidan Kavanagh1984, 8

Inculturation challenges the liturgical identity of Anglicanism, if this is understood as centring around the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer. It also challenges any Western ethnocentricism within the worship and mission of the Anglican Church, working within the spirit of the XXXIV Article.

4. Inculturation and African liturgical renewal

The insights into worship gained from African liturgical renewal are numerous as we have already observed. African traditions are rich with symbolism, self-expression within community, holistic understanding of the work of God and a generosity of spirit to name but a few.

After our examination of the Anglican Church in Kenya's *A Service of Holy Communion* as an example of African liturgical renewal we can summarise its insights as being:

i) Incarnational theology of God and Christology

ii) Symbolism in new African liturgy elements

iii) Simplicity and participation

iv) Underlying Identity: Affirming the new identity in Christ and the positive attributes of African Traditional religion that underpin African cultures

v) Relationship: The African emphasis on the theological and liturgical importance of community, as against Western individualism, expressed in Mbiti's maxim: We are therefore I am."

vi) The relationship with the West to be based on cultural dialogue not monologue.

vii) Response: Liturgy as the Church's mission; as the response of humanity to God; expressed in culturally appropriate ways.

The process of inculturation challenges the Church in its mission to the world, its mode of proclaiming the Gospel and its life in worship, expressed through liturgy. For the reasons reflected on throughout, the demands of inculturation need to be taken from the realms of academia to the Church at 'grassroots'.

Furthermore the impetus for true inculturation has to come from the grassroots in order to reflect a culture's world view and this must always be borne in mind by theologians and

liturgists if their ideas are to be relevant and effective in the Church's life of mission...

5. Mission: the purpose and goal of inculturation

Mission is fundamental to the life and purpose of the Church.
It is reaching out from the Great Commission in and with the love of God shown in Christ of which evangelism is only one element. Mission is not what the Church does but what the Church is. Mission is central to the being or existence of the Church and all aspects of Church life should therefore be interpreted in the light of the concept of mission. Mission should be understood as both macrocosmic and microcosmic with no fundamental difference between the two levels.
If mission is central to theology it must be central to theological education. If it is central to the life of the Church, then it must be central to every aspect of the Church's ministry, including leading its people into worship.
If mission is global, then church leaders and theologians must be helped to achieve a global vision for mission.

So from what we have observed, is inculturation an optional innovation or essential to the mission and ministry of the Church?
Inculturation, I would argue, is not just about changing liturgy but assuming the Church's responsibility for the proclamation and extension of the kingdom of God, daily commitment to justice and truth. It is the fresh breath of the radical nature of the Gospel. It is not new liturgy for liturgy's sake but liturgy for the Church's sake and for the world's sake, long-term.

However, the Christian Gospel will always remain a scandal to the world 's cultures (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:22,23) for Christ himself, although speaking in stories using relevant images, still had to say "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."(Mark 4:9).
For that reason, inculturation does not guarantee listening ears and responding lives to the Gospel of Christ. Inculturation does not mean elimination of the scandal of Christ for that would be a distortion of the Gospel.[17]

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[17] Kosuke Koyama1983, 291-295

It is my belief that the application of inculturation, in its more self-conscious expression exemplified in African theologies and inculturated African liturgies such as the Eucharistic rite in the Anglican Church in Kenya, has much more to offer the Church in the future. Inculturation is synonymous with and a catalyst for change and will not always be welcomed by those who fear the new by holding tightly onto the old.
There will always need to be a continual referral to the universal norms of Christianity as well as to the hard-learned lessons from the past . The Church will continue to have to have its eyes fully open to the cultural milieu within which it proclaims and ministers the Gospel and the confidence to find new ways of expressing the Gospel in ways in which ordinary people can understand and respond to God through Christ.

The process of inculturation within Christianity began in the Incarnation of God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The history of the worldwide Church since has been a history of the unconscious process of inculturation the Gospel in theology, worship and mission. Now inculturation has been formalised and part of that process has been the development of local theologies like African Theology and local liturgies such as the Zaire Mass and the Kenyan Service of Holy Communion.
The Church's growth in maturity reflected in its quality of *koinonia* within and expressed through worship and mission has often been stimulated by the cultural challenges that our changing world has brought and even at the most difficult times in the Church's history, the life-giving, hope-bringing power of Gospel of Christ has *never* been found wanting.

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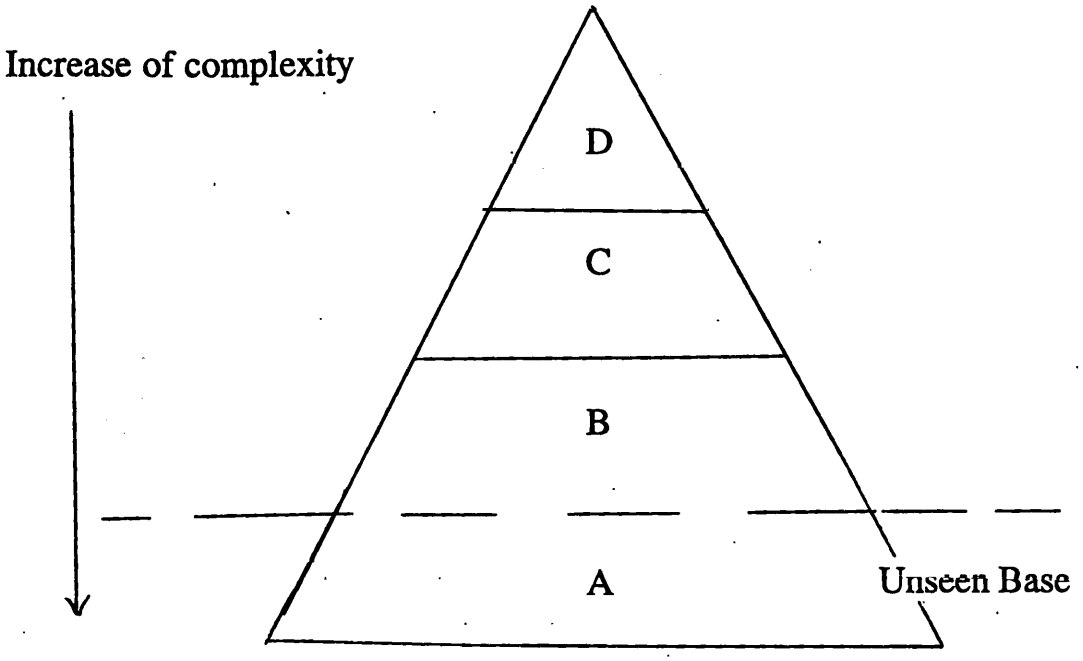
INTERVIEWS

Fr Aylward Shorter, Institute of Mission, Mill Hill, London, March 1994
The Bishop of Ruwe Church, Nairobi, Kenya, June 1994
Rt. Revd. David Gitari, Kerugoya, Kenya, July 1994

APPENDIX

A model of culture

[Based on a description of a model by G. Linwood Barney, 1979]



A: IDEOLOGY, COSMOLOGY, WORLD VIEW

B: VALUES

C: INSTITUTIONS e.g MARRIAGE , LAW, EDUCATION

D: MATERIAL ARTEFACTS, OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOUR, CUSTOMS